University of Alberta

In Sleep, I See...
Luri Knowledge and Learning

By

Christina Van der Wal ©

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Date: 31 January, 2003

In the name of

God

the Compassionate

the Merciful

to the

Luri

people

that the world may know

and to

Alijān

to whom I tell my dreams

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis *In Sleep I See...Luri Knowledge and Learning* submitted by Christina Van der Wahl in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in International and Global Education

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the cultural themes of the Luri cognitive map learned through their dream-telling ritual. It uses ethnography to explore categories of Luri indigenous knowledge, and to discover the ways in which they pass on their knowledge through the ritual of dream-telling. The Lurs are a nomadic tribe of about five million people, living in the Zagros mountains of western Iran. In Luri society, dream-telling is both a means of informal learning and a symbol representing the transmission of indigenous knowledge systems. Their shared world view incorporates several general themes, reflecting important domains for both the individual and the society: control and authority; social status, reputation, and saving face; community identity, and social relationships.

While examining community development issues through informal learning, this study bridges the disciplines of symbolic anthropology, indigenous education, and cognitive science. The author did fieldwork among the Lurs over a period of nine months, engaging in participant observation and ethnographic interviews, and recording more than eighty tellings of dreams.

This account describes in detail the structures and functions of dream-telling, and elucidates the cultural themes emerging from the ritual. Its concluding chapter responds to the research questions, cites implications for informed development, and reflects on the author's own encounter with Luri cultural themes during the research process.

thank-you

the Luri people

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background and Research Questions

The educational academic literature focuses heavily on schooling, and in particular K–12 schooling, building a body of knowledge especially of value and interest to professional teachers. Somewhat on the margins of this literature are two other bodies of knowledge that partially overlap with the first and partially challenge it and propose alternative views of educational activity. The first of these is the adult education literature that speaks to a knowledge domain largely outside of formal schooling processes, and the second is a loosely bounded body of knowledge grounded more in the social sciences than schooling per se. It is not coincidental that a writer in the adult education literature was the first to confront issues of definition when Coombs (1974) spoke to distinctions between formal education, non-formal education and informal education.

Formal education referred to schooling at all levels and whether initiated by state, church, or community and family systems (Carleton, 1975). It is this activity, as the dominant form of teaching and learning in contemporary society, that has gradually appropriated the word education in English language usage. The second, non-formal education, includes that great variety of activities more or less formally organized in areas such as agricultural extension education, literacy programmes, and various political and social movements. It is organized intentional activity, with teachers and learners, but characterized especially by being outside the 'certification' structure of formal education and thus lacking a focus on examinations and a hierarchical largely age-graded structure of learning. The third form of education, informal education, could perhaps more adequately be characterized as informal and incidental learning, the name Marsick and Watkins give to their 1991 book on the subject. It generally lacks intentional teaching and learning, it often implies a social context rather than an individual one, and individual participants are often unaware that learning is being achieved through their 'educational' activities (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Chaiklin, 1993, cf. Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000). More recently it has been termed 'social learning' because of its obvious embeddedness in social and cultural activity (Schon, 1994). It is informal education that provides an overall frame for this thesis.

Informal education can also be conceived of as addressing processes of acquiring values, knowledge, and behaviours, processes that are addressed in the social sciences under rubrics such as socialization, enculturation, transmission of culture, acculturation and so on. This observation returns us to the body of education-related knowledge that has developed within the social sciences, in particular sociology of education and anthropology of education.

Of particular interest here are the many social science studies that document relationships between a national schooling system, a notion of a national culture and language, and the loss of linguistic and cultural diversity across human societies. (Illich, 1988; Modiano, 1973; Freire, 1987). In addition, a very large body of literature speaks to the relationship between various levels of school performance and 'cultural differences'. School failure, 'dropping out' or early school leaving, low levels of educational aspirations, and dozens of other socially disvalued school related behaviours are analysed in relation to minority group membership and other disadvantaged or oppressed social and economic statuses in societies throughout the world (Gibson and Ogbu, 1991).

There are at least two minor strands that present alternative possible constructions of the relations between schooling and minority cultures. One argues formal schooling may disrupt indigenous and local cultural and linguistic development but active local communities that reincorporate graduates simply resume their 'educational work' when the community member leaves school at age 15 or 16 (Kulick, 1992). The other strands document attempts to incorporate some informal educational practices with the intention of modifying formal schooling processes and enabling them to support rather than disrupt specific cultures and languages (e.g. Harris, 1991; Hornberger, 1989). All of these studies, both those that focus on negative schooling outcomes and those that observe alternatives, implicitly or explicitly refer to informal education as the possible source of, or solution to, minority problems and schooling.

Thus these studies leave open a space to bring questions asked by anthropologists and others in terms of 'transmission of culture' as informal education questions, to strengthen the potential relationship among these diverse literatures that are all, in one way or another, about learning in a social context. This thesis represents a preliminary effort

along those lines as I sought a research setting that would enable me to observe some specific "minority" culture's informal educational activity. By definition, a minority culture exists in relation to a dominant culture, the "national" culture, and in contemporary societies to a dominant state structure and its national school system.

In many of the world's societies, the 'minority' cultures that are most sharply affected by the development of mass schooling are those termed 'tribal' or indigenous groups. Thus a study that addresses some aspects of informal education within a tribal group or indigenous group would potentially strengthen linkages between diverse 'education' related literatures, and provide some indication of alternative paths to existing formal education systems with peoples who tend to benefit least from those systems.

Addressing so-called tribal groups as minority cultures within a nation-state presents a number of problems, but using the term as a means to link specific types of studies to the work being discussed here seems justified based on many statements made in the literature such as Salzman's (1989. p. ix) writing of tribal and nomadic peoples. (They) "are increasingly marginalized at the same time that they are being more fully integrated into wider systems". The tribal group identified for the research conducted for this study is the Lur of Iran.

In the typical organization of formal education, there are three explicitly recognized central activities. These are pedagogy or strategies of teaching, curriculum referring to the content or substance of that which is taught, and examination or evaluation which is an assessment of the successful learning of what is taught (Bernstein, 1975). Informal education can be assessed in similar ways, although it generally lacks a strong notion of evaluation. Further, the term curriculum is seldom used in this context. Rather terms such as indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, or even lay knowledge are likely to be invoked. As this work will focus on a 'tribal group', indigenous knowledge is the preferred term.

When the issue is one of maintenance of a tribal culture within a school or formal education setting, the form taken by all three of the above educational activities may be challenged. It is often the content or curriculum of education that is most strongly contested. There are many ways to speak to a disjunction between dominant and

minority cultural content when such debates occur, but one term is 'cognitive maps' (Brody, 1981). The interest of this study is on the cognitive maps or knowledge system of a tribal peoples or cultural group, a knowledge system that is widely held as one element of the group's shared culture.

Cognitive maps in anthropology do not attend to individual cognition as such, but indigenous conceptual categories or the boundaries of knowledge in a given cultural group. They may be construed as the cultural themes gleaned from semantic domains. Not only is the content of a group's knowledge culturally defined, even their categorization of knowledge is bounded by their cultural cognitive map. Banathy, for example, describes a cognitive map as "an abstract schema which individuals, groups, organizations, and societies create and use to observe, understand, and represent perceived phenomena in the world" and "a process by which [they] make representations of their perception of the world, and their understanding of their place in the world, in their individual and collective minds" (Banathy, as cited in Laszlo, Masulli, Artigiani, & Csanyi, 1993, p. 205).

The overall research question that this study then addresses is: What are the indigenous conceptual categories of knowledge of the Iranian Lurs, as manifested by their informal education? Given the need to limit the size and complexity of the study it was determined that the most effective means to complete such a study would be to identify a single cultural ritual (or potentially other cultural phenomenon) to provide focus to the study. That specification of the research question will be addressed below, following a brief introduction to the overall conceptual frame that is used for this work.

Symbolic Anthropology and this study

The stance of symbolic anthropology was chosen for this study because of its basic assumption: that the essence of a culture is revealed by its symbols. Symbolic anthropology "views human beings as the carriers and products, as the subjects and objects, of a system of signs and symbols which serve as a means of communication to impart knowledge and messages. These provide the foundation for action and behavior, as well as ideas and values" (Applebaum, 1987, p. 478). Thus symbolic anthropology

was deemed an appropriate theoretical framing for an education related research questions, a question that centres on communication and imparting knowledge.

Giving an account of symbolic anthropological research involves "using a key symbol which expresses the essential notions of the culture as the means by which to conceptualize the cultural system" (Edelsward, 1993, p. 5). Such a symbol could, in fact, be a ritual or similar activity that can be interpreted as symbolic of 'the essential notions of the culture', as demonstrated by Edelsward's analysis of the sauna in Finnish society. The specific symbol for this study was not known before fieldwork in Iran was begun, but H. F. Wolcott (1999) expresses this as the "ideal circumstance" for ethnographers, when they are "relatively free to find the places where they would like to conduct their studies and then tease out the problem(s) they would like to investigate in those settings" (p. 33).

However, there were several criteria for choosing the symbol (or ritual) that would narrow the focus of this study. It had to be a culturally central site of learning, as defined by the ethnographic data. It had to be used to transmit cultural knowledge and values through a system that is shared and taught. And it had to contain knowledge, actors, institutions, and activities that were visible as data. Several ways of learning that were a part of Luri culture were considered: storytelling, riddles, poetry, various good luck rituals, the shabneshini or sarkeshi nightly tea gathering, or people's discussions about community development.

After a few months of participant observation and analysis at the research site, it became apparent that dream-telling serves well the social function of teaching and learning shared cultural knowledge. It was clear at the outset that dream-telling was an important part of Luri life, by the frequency with which the subject is raised. Observation of dream-telling led to the awareness of specific patterns in the ritual, and to glimpses of the boundaries of their expressions. Chapter Four's analysis of the data clarifies that the telling of dreams, the meanings bestowed on them, and the belief in those meanings have unequivocal sociocultural significance for the Lurs.

This study assumes that culture influences dreams as they are told in a social context, and this activity becomes an occasion for the construction and re-construction of shared

cognitive categories. Even among vastly different dreams, within a society a pattern of cultural knowledge may be discovered upon analysis of the ways in which dreams are related. Dream-telling is certainly outside the realm of formal learning; in fact, it sometimes functions to defy those very bounds that are strictly laid down by larger authorities. Because of the far-reaching influence of the dominant Iranian culture, especially in areas of education and religion, tribal social institutions such as dream-telling provide an alternative expression for cultural knowledge which may be uniquely Luri.

Thus once the ethnographic research was in progress, the question for the precise context of the Lurs was specified. The research question refined, was: what cultural themes of the Luri cognitive map are learned through the dream-telling ritual? This study examines Luri indigenous knowledge, making use of ethnographic theme analysis, and Luri informal education, looking particularly at how knowledge is passed on through dream-telling.

Significance

Understanding of indigenous knowledge systems is important because "if the symbols of a cultural cognitive map accurately express the societal experience of an environment, then they can functionally orient a society in material reality and successfully orchestrate collective behaviour" (Laszlo, Masulli, Artigiani, & Csanyi, 1993, p. 29). That is, systems of shared knowledge, composed of cultural themes, brought together through symbols such as the Luri dream-telling ritual, have a cohesive element in sustaining cultural integrity within a larger dynamic world. Examinations of informal education, and especially of the symbols that relay indigenous knowledge, are a means of answering questions about the nature of the cultural cognitive map. More specifically, these answers are discovered by asking "how culture is transmitted from one generation to the next, how individuals share in this transmission, and how learning and transmitting culture are related to society's social organization" (Middleton, 1970, p. xii).

A study such as the one documented here explores the theoretical boundaries for development with regard to cultural expression. Anthropological study of a group's cultural identity is an ideal strategy for ascertaining 'appropriate' development. Banathy

is one among the proponents of transformation who has stressed the need for a "new cognitive map of education," one that is more consistent with the societal environment (Banathy, as cited in Laszlo, Masulli, Artigiani, & Csanyi, 1993, p. 209). Emphasizing the imperative of change in our conceptions of education, indigenous knowledge systems are essential to help form the framework for new educational models. By discovering the indigenous values inherent in cultural cognitive maps, it is hoped that developers would be sensitive to the people's own perceived needs, and to their own ways of fulfilling those needs. The cultural identity of a people group often contributes significantly to their community self-concept and their motivation toward development. Indigenous development models may incorporate meaningful symbols, unique to their heritage. Therefore, the study of indigenous knowledge systems is useful for development, in that appropriate development goals are indigenously defined by felt needs.

This research is significant not only for development work, but also in broadening the scholarly development of a conception of the mind. B. Shore (1996), in his noteworthy work intersecting the disciplines of cultural anthropology and cognitive science, asserts that "the interpretation of cultures in particular has much to tell us about the character of the mind in general" (p. 8). One aspect of this is the new recognition in cognitive science that a theory of cognition is incomplete if only regarded on the individual level; it must also include an understanding of cultural influences on the mind. "To understand the phenomenon of personal cognition, one must simultaneously regard the learner as an autonomous agent working to fit in with her or his context, [and] as a component of a larger social order" (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 73).

This study also makes a significant contribution to the discipline of cognitive science; it is a new concept in the field that culture must not be a neglected factor in dealing with cognitive processes. For example, tests of cognitive science models attempt to reproduce human behaviour by inputting the rules and symbol systems by which the models operate. However, without the input of cultural knowledge, these models often fail, or incorrectly attribute behaviour to an internal source (Hutchins, 1995, p. 359).

Further, an ethnographic account such as this has the capacity to provide a record, to be of value as a historical case study as well as for its potential comparison to other cultural

groups. One appeal of such a study is the genuine lack of research on Luri issues, especially in attempting to bridge three subdisciplines: symbolic anthropology, indigenous education, and cognitive science. Symbolic anthropology attends to the cultural symbols meaningful to a people in order to characterise their ways of thinking. In this study, the inherent meanings of the dream-telling ritual reflect Luri cultural themes. Cognitive science is attuned to the structures of the mind that people utilise to formulate knowledge; in the case of this study, the cultural themes provide the framework for these structures of the mind in the Luri context. This research also concerns indigenous education, which looks at both a people's own knowledge and their own ways of passing it on.

Throughout life, every person is both a learner and a teacher of shared knowledge (Middleton, 1970, p. xii). This reflects the role of both actor and institution in the process of knowledge transmission. Prior to the assumption that it is possible to discover the categories of knowledge, or cultural themes, through the informal educational structures, is the realisation that informal education, as it performs the role of an 'institution', is a vehicle for conveying the "symbolic systems through which we organize and see the world" (Giddens, 1992, pp. 114-115). From a survey of the works of R. Arasteh (1962), B. R. Logashova (1982), A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner (1986), D. Menashri (1992), and I. D. Mortensen (1993), one may infer as well that within a society where the school functions as a means of inculcating the values of the state and of the cultural majority, indigenous cultural groups such as the Lurs often use informal education to pass on indigenous knowledge.

People tend to correlate their behaviours to the social structure, which is a representation of their cultural cognitive map (Laszlo, Masulli, Artigiani, & Csanyi, 1993). Duplicating this hierarchical structure, the research objectives of this study are ordered from the implicit (Luri cultural themes, cognitive maps, indigenous knowledge) to the explicit (the institutions, actors, and activities of Luri dream-telling), but research was carried out, and findings emerged, upward; that is, from explicit to implicit. The questions of Luri indigenous knowledge, exemplified in the cultural themes of this study, are answered through analysis of these elements of the dream-telling ritual.

Related to indigenous knowledge systems of the Lurs are factors such as dependency, forced acculturation, ethnic and socioeconomic identity, and majority subjugation, which have played a role in bringing these people to their present condition. In many other cases of tribal groups, low literacy rates and perceived ethnic inferiority have stifled cultural identity and expression. It is hoped that through study of the social, political, religious, economic, linguistic, and cultural values unique to a people group, sensible strategies for educational development may evolve, for the Lurs and other groups in similar situations.

The chapters that follow will introduce a literature that relates to the above research question, describe the research methodology, present the findings of the research in terms of both the structure of telling the dream and the content of the telling, and finally present some further reflections on the research process and findings.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the context of this study, regarding the position of Luri knowledge and learning. It includes some of the many resources that were helpful in contributing to the work of this study. The first section observes literature used in the formation of research questions, and in understanding the context of fieldwork. The section following is organized by looking at the various contexts in which the primary research topics are found. These topics are indigenous knowledge systems, informal education, and the specific case of Iranian tribal peoples.

Research Formation

The research began with a scouring of libraries for books about nomads, about Iran, about the interaction of anthropology and cognition, about how people use indigenous knowledge in development programmes, and about how cultural groups use informal means to pass on their traditions.

C. Geertz's classic *The interpretation of cultures* (1973) offers a working definition of culture, and especially that part of it that is variously called world view, explanatory model, or cognitive map. According to Geertz (1973), meaning is "stored" in symbols, while ritual is a symbolic dramatization of elements of the knowledge system (p. 127). A culture's dominant symbols, such as dream-telling for the Lurs, at the same time represent its system of knowledge, and validate a people's constructed, collective image of reality. This idea is echoed in H. Applebaum's (1987) summary of the history of symbolism and how it came to be used in the study of cultures. A concise explanation of symbolic anthropology is given in J. L. Dolgin, D. S. Kemnitzer, and D. M. Schneider's introduction in their *Reader in the study of symbols and meanings* (1977). They explain that all cultures have ordered and coherent systems of meaning, which are encoded in symbols. One of these many symbols is ritual. Symbolic anthropology represents an attempt to decipher the meaning by attending to the symbolic systems. This was an appropriate sequence for reaching the heart of Luri culture, but it also presented the problem that most anthropologists have, according to Wolcott (1999): the indefinite research question. There was the necessity of going to the Lurs without knowing the specific symbol, but with that "openness to inquiry, to set one's problem focus in the

course of coming to know a field site" that, Wolcott says, "has remained one of the unique characteristics of ethnography" (pp. 24-25). C. O. Frake's article, entitled "The ethnographic study of cognitive systems" (1969), was an assurance of the possibility of bringing these two— ethnographic research and cognitive science— together.

Foundational to this conceptual combination is the assumption that cognition cannot be studied only by examining the individual mind, because cognition is a cultural artefact. This insight is revealed by E. Hutchins's *Cognition in the wild* (1995), which highlights the importance of cultural data in the analysis of human cognition. Hutchins uses an ethnography of organisational information processing in ship navigation to show how cognition must be viewed as a cultural process, that the utmost units of cognitive analysis are outside of the individual, and that it is unrealistic to attribute observed behaviour solely to cognitive processes that are inside the mind. Hutchins elaborates on the interrelatedness of culture and mind that B. Davis, D. Sumara, and R. Luce-Kapler (2000) also recognise in their educational work. Murray (1977) concurs, also implicating the role of symbol in cultural learning: "symbols and symbolic usage mediate between the social and the individual, establishing an interface between them as well as being internalized into the constitution of the individual's action. They express relations between social beings and create new ones, being what Geertz and Kluckhohn and Kroeber call both 'models of' and 'models for' reality" (p. 215). Casson's summative work in cognitive anthropology (1994) confers a fine background in that field.

Construction of the research questions for this study necessitated making sure that the words used were current with the literature. I. Craib (1992), as well as H. F. Wolcott (1999), were consulted for their ideas about *structures*, while discussions of theory by V. J. Marsick and K. E. Watkins (1990, pp. 33-34) and by G. Foley (1999, p. 7) shaped this study's definitions of *informal* learning. G. G. Darkenwald and S. B. Merriam (1982) indicated the definition of *institution* that is used in this study in the social science sense: *not* the "red-brick schoolhouse or the stadium-dominated campus" (p. 153).

Considering the research question set out in this study, ethnography was a most appropriate way of collecting, analysing, and presenting the data. Such an immense task required the consultation of literature on this methodology, such as Geertz's

Interpretation of cultures (1973), P.C. Salzman's reflections on traditional anthropological fieldwork in his 1986 article, D. Bradburd's *Being there: The necessity of fieldwork* (1998), and a *Field ethnography* manual by P. Kutsche (1998). H. F. Wolcott (2001) also lends some useful advice in his *Art of fieldwork*. Bradburd's and Salzman's works are doubly appealing because they did anthropological fieldwork in Iran.

J. P. Spradley (1980), of course, is the standard as a practical guide for doing anthropological fieldwork. He describes anthropology as "the work of describing a culture" in order to "understand another way of life from the native point of view" (1980, p. 3). This research keeps generally within his outlines of gathering and analysing cultural data, while the ethnographic works of C.-J. Charpentier (1972), D. Bradburd (1990), and L. M. Edelsward (1993) demonstrate how the dream-telling data may be placed in a framework that is understandable to the reader. The Edelsward text, in particular, is a good example of an ethnography done in the style of symbolic anthropology; that is, it examines a whole culture in terms of one central concept that describes and unifies the culture. *Sauna as symbol* focuses the explanation of dream-telling as a ritual, a model of world view, and a representation of cultural identity.

The University of Alberta *Conduct* guide (2000) and Anonby (2002) are applied as references for ethics and for orthography, respectively.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The term *cognitive map* is encountered in E. Laszlo, I. Masulli, R. Artigiani, and V. Csanyi's work (1993), in which the authors set up a paradigm for discussing the organization of the mind. However, the cognitive map is very much similar to other scholars' references to *worldview*, *cultural model*, or *indigenous knowledge system* (Geertz, 1973; Casson, 1994). Laszlo *et al.* use the term to designate the individual's mental representations of the world, including conceptual categories of knowledge or cultural themes. In the process of learning, humans extrapolate principled knowledge to those contexts in which they have no direct experience. The cultural cognitive map, then, is the collective understanding linked by language and symbols. These are important concepts in the systems of knowledge the research of this study explores, because they touch on theories of knowledge transmission and social change.

Ideas about the cognitive map are connected with readings by J. Middleton (1970), R. Kidd and N. Colletta (1980), and A. M. Ranaweera (1989). Those authors' formulations of the way a community shares and passes on a collective cognitive map are of interest to this study, especially considering the ways a minority culture like the Lurs' is able to survive series of invasions, both cultural and military, over the centuries. The fact that they have managed to keep their indigenous knowledge systems intact has helped them to do this, and to continue to pass on their culture despite the many decentralising forces they have encountered.

Contributors to the 1980 anthology by Kidd and Colletta discuss how indigenous social structures and traditional media are used in informal education and development. The anthology contains case studies from numerous countries of the developing world. Of particular interest to this study are Bonanni's study of indigenous mental structures (p. 272ff), Ouedraogo and Rideout's analysis of traditional self-development modalities (p. 150ff), and the first chapter on tradition and change by co-editor N. Colletta. This first chapter is thematically characteristic of the case studies it precedes; it explains the centrality of indigenous forms in terms of the suitability of cultural knowledge and traditional technology to local conditions, the acceptability of developments in the community when they use indigenous forms, and the higher degree of project sustainability in such cases.

In all of these reviews, a stark delineation must be made between indigenous *forms* and indigenous *meanings* or knowledge. Many of the cases in Kidd and Colletta (1980) describe how external agendas (e.g. "conscientization", "political education") are presented through familiar media, but this is not the same as preservation of indigenous culture.

Ethnographic analysis of the dream-telling ritual corresponds to studies by C.-J. Charpentier (1972) and L. M. Helfgott (1994), presenting examples in which a particular cultural symbol is valuable in more closely examining local patterns of learning. Charpentier's account of the Afghan traditional bazaar, while providing insights into socioeconomic structure, also formulates a vision for the way the ethnographer must employ descriptive detail. The assumption is that implicit indigenous structures, such as

the cultural themes presented in this study, can be discovered and are made explicit through ethnographic research in the form of participant observation. L. M. Helfgott, in his book *Ties that bind* (1994), has done a comprehensive survey of the literature surrounding the Iranian carpet, exposing its historical and cultural significance. Helfgott's analysis reveals the powerful place of the carpet in informal education, for "weaving provides an avenue of socialization" (p. 186). The analysis contained in this study, of learning cultural knowledge through ritual, may be situated among such comparable ethnographic accounts as that of T. O. Beidelman (1997) and F. Barth (1975). The vast scope of such literature institutes a niche in the field of informal education for the dream-telling ritual; it presents the perspective that learning can be done in a great variety of ways.

Learning cultural knowledge through the dream-telling ritual is another example of uses of dreams in society, a subject examined in D. Shulman and G. G. Stroumsa's *Dream cultures* (1999). Their collection of articles illustrates many of the ways in which people of different cultures see dreaming as an extension of reality. S. Sviri's (1999) article on Medieval Islamic treatment of dreams (pp. 252-273) is valuable for comparison, although it should be noted that in the context of Islam in Iran, Luri dream-telling is not an accepted practice. Shulman and Stroumsa explicitly assume that dreaming is a cultural act. This is an important point but this research does not represent direct access to Luri dreams, but only to the telling of them. However, the telling of dreams is embedded in culture as well, and cannot be distinguished from it. E. Bourguignon's (1972) and B. Tedlock's (1994) compilations of anthropological interests in dreams situate the research focus of Luri dream-telling in past scholarship on the topic.

Informal Education, Learning, and Knowledge Transmission

Before engaging the subject of Luri informal learning, this section, for the sake of contrast, reviews literature on the formal education system in Iran. A. H. K. Sassani (1962), R. Arasteh (1962), I. Ayman (1974), and the Ministry of Information's report (1973) on the government's literacy campaign clarifies the issue of the Iranian formal education system, the two former from the perspective of Persians. D. Menashri (1992) provides an update of the education system since the Islamic revolution. However, these

sources leave one to wonder about the direct impact of formal education on the Lurs, and how the Lurs respond to the nationalistic programmes described.

This subject is approached further in R. Arasteh (1962), B. R. Logashova (1982), A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner (1986), D. Menashri (1992), and I. D. Mortensen (1993). A reading of these works reveals that the Iranian tribes, and in particular the Lurs, have used informal education as a form of resistance against the values and formal structures imposed on them by the government and the Persian majority. The noted literature explain that when majority views are taught to minority peoples through the formal education system, indigenous cultural knowledge and informal learning often function to undermine the schools' teachings.

In the process of understanding the role of the Luri dream-telling ritual as informal education, it is helpful to look at other societies in which unconventional approaches to education are employed. A. M. Ranaweera's book (1989) highlights such case studies from a number of different countries. The formal educational systems draw heavily from informal learning, relating curriculum to life situations and being specifically designed to address local needs and problems. Thematically organized curricula use locally specific learning material, and integrate the content of instruction in sciences, social studies, and language (Ranaweera, 1989, pp. 93ff.). In this framework, as in the Luri dream-telling ritual, negotiation of curriculum by learners, as well as their participation and direction in development efforts, are considered a valuable asset. Flexible location and class schedule are emphasized. The study of the mobile tent school for ethnic minorities in the Philippines is especially relevant to the situation of nomadic peoples such as the Lurs.

Types of informal education comparable to dream-telling are the examples edited by J. Middleton (1970) and by R. O. Niehoff (1976). Middleton's anthropology of education collection (1970) covers a wide range of studies, from socialization and unconventional teaching methods to initiation rites and patterns of community-centred education. The researchers' focus on socialization as informal education answers, for various contexts, the questions in this study about the institutions, actors, and activities involved in knowledge transmission. Niehoff's report from a 1976 conference and workshop addresses issues and practices in informal education, based on projects in poor, rural

areas around the globe. It describes many projects and outlines policies of organizations involved in informal education and development. The dream-telling ritual is situated in "informal education experiences associated with learning from each other and from the process" (Niehoff, 1976, p. 212), which the Niehoff report differentiates from deliberate instruction. Less formal kinds of learning often take the form of traditional rituals or ceremonies, cited as cultural symbols that serve to harmonize the learning process with everyday life. In his landmark article, "Symbols in African ritual," V. W. Turner (1977) presents important insights into ritual, suggesting in particular that ritual symbols can both have meaning, signifying something else, and imbue power, often in the form of various life benefits. Turner's work is valuable for its implication that one can extrapolate the Luri dream-telling ritual as part of their symbolic system.

The specific case of learning cultural knowledge through the dream-telling ritual fits into R. G. D'Andrade's (1961) explanation of common cultural uses of dreams, according to anthropological accounts of various societies. These involve "emotional catharsis through ritualized methods of reacting to dream experiences, in which the effect of a bad dream may be dispelled or a good dream made to come true by a more or less elaborate ritual, such as not telling the dream, or acting out the dream commands, or making a sacrifice" (p. 316).

The Lurs, Iranian Nomadic Tribes, and the Like

The literature is scant in reference to the Luri people. However, this section reviews both the available literature on the Lurs as well as works about peoples similar to them socioeconomically (nomadic pastoralists), religiously (Muslims), and politically (Iranians).

A general reading about Iran found S. Mackey's (1996) popular work *The Iranians: Persia, Islam, and the soul of a nation* to be a comprehensive guide. This study's conclusions related to resistance are particularly relevant to issues in tribe-state relations in Iran, such as those examined in studies by P. C. Salzman (1982), W. O. Beeman (1986), N. R. Keddie (1986), and others in A. Banuazizi and M. Weiner's tri-national report (1986). This latter collection of articles is an apt placement for this study as it regards the national context of Luri cultural knowledge, in an understanding of political

issues concerning the tribes within the three Asian countries. Keddie's section on Iran (pp. 157-166) describes the political position of its ethnic minorities in relation to the state in both historical and contemporary contexts, and the role of religion in power and policy. These readings, from the wider perspective of Iran, gives a sense of the country and its diverse peoples.

A more specific understanding of the context of the Iranian tribes may be gleaned through literature by P. C. Salzman (1972; 1980) and B. R. Logashova (1982). Much of the work concerns nomadism, because it is a defining feature of the tribes including the Luri people, despite the forced settlement of some segments of the population in recent decades. The cultural themes of Chapter Four of this study speak to another characteristic of nomads in the literature; identity, along with distinct history, have lent explanation to influences on their indigenous knowledge systems.

P. C. Salzman (1980) and authors contributing to his *When nomads settle* outline cases in which traditionally nomadic groups have been obliged to lead sedentary lives. This process, the authors note, is a rare subject in academic studies; the book focuses mainly on economic effects of sedentarization, but some helpful trends emerge about the distinctly nomadic sense of identity, evident in their reactions to the change. Salzman's own chapter deals with the Baluchis of Iran, and some applications of these principles to the Lurs have proven useful. B. R. Logashova's article (1982) is also concerned with nomadic pastoralism, but rather than being a study in economic systems, it focuses on the social organization in Iranian tribes. In particular, Logashova discusses contemporary social transformations resulting from changes in power, resource control, and settlement patterns.

This study contributes to information on the particular cultural situation of the Lurs. Perhaps the most comprehensive work on Luri culture to date is S. Amanolahi's *Qom-e Lor* [The Lur clan-group] (1991). Unfortunately, it is written in Fārsi (and not yet translated), making it inaccessible to most western scholars; nevertheless, this study uses it as a reference text. *Qom-e Lor* covers Luri tribal and clan divisions and lineages, languages, geography, archaeology, and history; it lacks, however, a section on informal education, a piece this study could contribute.

A tread through the writings of the few who have gone before on this road allows one to glimpse the Lurs as a people, and their way of life in some of its aspects. The travel journal of F. Stark (1940), although not a product of intentional research, contains insightful anecdotes about her experiences among the Lurs in the 1930s, at a time when Reza Shah Pahlavi [the king of Iran]'s anti-tribal policies were just beginning to take effect. Taken beside Stark's unendorsed observations of Luri culture, this study provides an analysis of certain of the themes to which her journal alludes. Archaeological and historical data on Luristan are covered by L. Edelberg's expedition report (1966) entitled *Seasonal dwellings*. A more recent study, I. D. Mortensen's *Nomads of Luristan* (1993), is a poignant text on the Lurs, covering their history, material culture, and pastoral livelihood. The study explores topics of nomadism, gives a general outline of the Luri tribal system, and describes in detail their tools and weapons, buildings, clothing, and musical instruments. It also contains a wealth of references to other scholars and works of interest. Although Mortensen notes the cultural uses of collected materials, it does not attempt to analyse their meanings in the Luri context, as does the account of the dream-telling ritual in this study.

A book that is very close to this study in terms of the subject of Luri cultural knowledge (though not in method of presentation) is the product of E. Friedl's fieldwork (1991). She studied the Bakhtiāri, a confederation of Luri clans, and wrote insightful pieces on the women and children of one village (1991, 1997). Friedl's work is an intimate portrayal of the women's lives, and reveals the human side of the issues they face; there are naturally many cultural parallels with the Lurs of this study. The tone of E. W. Fernea's *Guests of the sheik: An ethnography of an Iraqi village* is suprisingly similar to that of Friedl, most likely because it presents women's perspectives, and because the informants are also rural-dwellers and Shi'a Muslims, like the Lurs of this study.

Related to the focus on dream-telling in this study, *Tales from Luristan* (Amanolahi & Thackston, 1986) is cause for thought on how the Lurs have customarily viewed the supernatural. Before the Revolutionary politicisation of Islam (since 1979), story-telling was an important part of their oral tradition. With respect to Luri learning through other forms of communication, the cultural themes noted in this study may be compared to

those of the folktales recorded by O. Mann (1910) and D. L. R. Lorimer and E. O. Lorimer (1919).

Other classic or noteworthy works which have been formative in presenting a context for this investigation into Iranian tribal groups include C. G. Feilberg's classics *La tente noire* (1944) and *Les Papis* (1952), F. Barth's portrayal of the Khamseh in *Nomads of south Persia* (1961), R. Tapper's volumes on Shahsevan tribal politics (1979, 1983, 1994), J. Black-Michaud's work on tribal economy in Luristan (1986), L. Beck's studies of the Qashaa'i people (1986, 1991), and D. Bradburd's analysis of Komachi social organization (1990).

Definitions

Firstly, culture is "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour" (Spradley, 1980, p. 6). This study uses the term *indigenous conceptual categories* to denote the boundaries of knowledge in a given culture. Such categories, in the form of *cultural themes*, allow people to organise the information they encounter in the world. Every culture selects a few concepts to focus on; this is necessary because it would be impossible to deal with all knowledge at once without ordering it in some fashion. A culture's way of ordering knowledge is variously labelled by anthropologists as its filter, grid, cognitive map, explanatory model, knowledge system, or world view. This study prefers to call it a *cognitive map*, defined as "an abstract schema which individuals, groups, organizations, and societies create and use to observe, understand, and represent perceived phenomena in the world. Cognitive mapping is a process by which individuals, groups, organizations and societies make representations of their perception of the world, and their understanding of their place in the world, in their individual and collective minds. These representations are implicit in the mind." (Banathy, as cited in Laszlo, Masulli, Artigiani, & Csanyi, 1993, p. 205). Banathy recognises that cultural knowledge, and the cognitive map, are largely implicit; they can be inferred by outsiders through observation (Laszlo, Masulli, Artigiani, & Csanyi, 1993, p. 205).

There has been much debate among educators about definitions of *formal*, *informal*, and *non-formal learning* or *education*. This study uses the term *informal learning* or *informal*

education to describe dream-telling because *who* controls the learning process matters less than *how* knowledge is shared. Informal education is the explicit representation of the transmission of cultural knowledge. Many scholars classify various types of education and learning, and their formality, according to *means* and *objectives* (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, pp. 33-34): the most important characteristics of dream-telling as a form of learning are that its means (i.e. the ritual) are shared and bilateral rather than individualised, and that its objectives are not consciously oriented toward learning. Dream-telling, as an instrument of cultural learning, is not formal in that its learning function is not explicitly intended; rather, it is incidental to other, recognized functions.

Dream-telling is at once a symbol and a ritual. As a symbol, it "conveys a message which stimulates thought or action" (Applebaum, 1987, p. 478), while as a ritual, it re-enacts their dreaming experiences to symbolically express their world view. It is both of these because "symbolizing as a mental activity can draw upon any type of object or gesture" (Applebaum, 1987, p. 479).

By *structures* this study means the sets of implicit rules that are enveloped in action (Giddens, as cited in Craib, 1992, pp. 112-113). Talking about informal educational *structures* in a culture presupposes that there is a pattern, and that this kind of anthropological study "is a call for tracing interrelated elements and fitting parts together" (Wolcott, 1999, p. 79). In the case of the dream-telling ritual, *structure* is a certain arrangement of the component actors, activities, and institutions— parts of the whole— described in Chapter Four of this study. When this study mentions learning *institutions*, it does not mean in the sense of schools, nor necessarily physical institutions, but rather conceptual institutions such as the family, a household, or a community (Knowles, as cited in Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 153). It is rather the idea of a social context (not necessarily a locale) in which learning takes place. Institutions are the "ordering of implicit rules (structures) in time and space... a practice that is deeply embedded in history and across space" (Giddens, as cited in Craib, 1992, p. 114). Finally, this study discusses knowledge *transmission*, and not knowledge generation, because as much as possible the research herein concerns traditional indigenous knowledge, rather than new information that is specifically a product of adaptation or response to change.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The Ethnographic Method

As noted in the introduction, informal education can be conceived of as addressing processes of acquiring values, knowledge, and behaviours, processes that are addressed in the social sciences under rubrics such as socialisation and cultural transmission. Common ground among these fields of study endows a space for strengthening the potential relationship among their diverse literatures that are all, in one way or another, about learning in a social context. The research setting of this thesis is positioned just along those lines so as to observe a specific culture's informal educational structures.

Knowledge systems and the ways of learning may appear to be abstract concepts to attempt to investigate closely. As described earlier in this study, however, these became more apparent through the observation of their more manifest counterparts: actors, activities, and institutions. The tool of ethnography assists the scholar to step back from his or her own worldview and to begin to understand the worldviews of other people.[1] Cognitive mapping, particularly including the analysis of semantic domains and of cultural data, is helpful in making conscious those values which are naturally implicit. Symbolic anthropology focuses on the socioculturally defined symbols that govern individuals' behaviour and guide the expression of shared sentiments. The method of ethnography thus translates between context and text, as the researcher is intent on "grasping the sense of specific occurrences and gestures [and]... stepping back to situate these meanings in wider contexts" (Clifford, 1983, p. 127).

The value in any ethnographic study is that in the narrowing of a focus, elements are seen that are familiar to oneself and common to humankind. This study examines the some of the ways in which people learn. Many hypotheses could be devised about how knowledge is transmitted among the Lurs by reading others' accounts of similar tribes, by reading about informal learning in general, or by extrapolating from analyses of other indigenous knowledge systems. But this is a specific context, to be captured in a specific text.

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[1] Thus the anthropologist attempts to recognize his or her own cognitive map(s), and to moderate the extent to which they shape the researcher's perceptions of the world.

In this specific study, there are a number of reasons why ethnography was the ideal method of research for the questions explored and for the particular situation being addressed. Cross-cultural research such as this, carried out in a foreign context, is valuable in that it uses the phenomenon of culture shock to its benefit. Thus the unfamiliar context allowed for wider scope, endowing fresh vision to matters that might have become dull and typical. Common experience may be appealed to in this regard: we see more that is new and strange, while we are often blind to the familiar.

Participant Observation

Ethnography is "the attempt to understand another life world using the selfÑ as much of it as possibleÑ as the instrument of knowing" (Ortner, 1995, pp. 173-174); thus, participation and direct experience are crucial elements of this method. However, knowing also involves analysis, and so experience is cross-examined by other experience, experimental models, literature, and other theories. Ethnographic fieldwork "is totally dialogic, in that it involves the constant questioning of experience and encounter as part of the creation of an understanding of the other - that is, model building"(Bradburd, 1998, p. 164). It is dialogic in that the researcher must constantly alternate between the roles of participant and observer.

The fieldwork was begun with an intentional openness to cultural suggestion, and it proceeded through ethnographic study to discover a structure of Luri informal education and its cultural themes, emerging with a framework for a narrower study. This would come to focus on dream-telling, as the specific cultural symbol used in the transmission of knowledge, which framed the research question in a context relevant to the Lurs.

Symbolic Anthropology and Dream-telling

The stance of symbolic anthropology was chosen for this study because of its corresponding basic assumption that the essence of a culture is revealed by its symbols. In the case of Luri society, dream-telling may stand as a symbol for learning cultural knowledge, and contains the meanings presented in the themes of Chapter Four. This represents a type of study in which "a single figure, incident, or cultural norm is investigated in order to decode its conceptual background," and in which "portraits of individual events or texts... are deciphered for what they say about the ways of thinking

that undergird them" (Swartz, 1996, pp. 5-6). Symbolic anthropology "views human beings as the carriers and products, as the subjects and objects, of a system of signs and symbols which serve as a means of communication to impart knowledge and messages. These provide the foundation for action and behavior, as well as ideas and values" (Applebaum, 1987, p. 478). Dream-telling is one such symbol in the Luri system, endowing their world with meaning. The knowledge that is communicated and learned through dream-telling is presented in this study as cultural themes. Inherent to the methodology is the assumption that the themes presented in this study are a part of Luri culture, not only features of the ritual; they are cultural themes of the Luri cognitive map, and are *manifested by* the dream-telling ritual.

Through the process described in the introductory chapter above, dream-telling was determined to be an apt focus for the study of learning indigenous knowledge. From that point I proceeded to examine knowledge, institutions, actors, and activities surrounding this particular symbol. A list of some of the questions considered during my participant observation appears in Appendix A. One note about language: while many studies have limited accuracy because they are done through translation, this study as much as possible used both Fārsi (the national language) and the local language, Luri. The time and effort placed on developing Luri language skills in this study not only increased the data's accuracy and reliability; it had positive effects on the informants as well. Of course, terms and language use were constantly discussed with native language speakers to ensure I had a full understanding of meanings in context.

Formal Ethnographic Interviews

During the latter part of the fieldwork, it became preferable to supplement the primary ethnographic research with formal interviews. J. P. Spradley advocates this method as it "employs questions designed to discover the cultural meanings people have learned" (Spradley, 1980, p. 123; 1979). This was done in order to confirm findings from the participant observation and also to elaborate on what informants specifically and explicitly thought about the ritual. The ethnographic study was concluded with the interviews, so that a more or less complete picture of dream-telling might be gained before imposing the structure of an interview on the data. For the same reason, the

interview questions were devised from the ethnographic data. This was helpful because in participant observation, I myself was acting as an informant, since I participated in the culture and specifically, in the dream-telling ritual. As I did so, I asked myself questions about the meanings of dream-telling, essentially interviewing myself. I used these same questions when interviewing other informants. The interview questions, which I translated into Luri, are featured in Appendix B.

Research Phase One

Coursework and Exploring the Literature

The first phase was preliminary research consisting of research done in Canada before doing fieldwork: a literature review that makes up the second chapter of this study; papers and readings, mostly in conjunction with course work, research of topics related to the study's questions, and informal methodology tests. The literature review of similar studies covered a range of topics, organized by looking at the various contexts in which the primary research issues are found, particularly:

- ethnographies, especially symbolic analyses,
- nomadic peoples, especially Iranian or Middle Eastern,
- the Iranian sociocultural and educational context,
- indigenous conceptualizations, and
- informal education.

Research as part of my course work included writing papers on indigenous buildings in Luristan, state-tribe relations in Iran, development and ethnography, trends in Iranian education since the revolution, the cognitive correlates of literacy, and informal learning in Iranian tribal groups. In addition, I did independent research on the above topics, interacted with Iranian people in Canada and participated in Iranian cultural activities. I also took a year-long course in Persian language (Fārsi), developing a beginning competency in the language.

Middle Eastward

During my coursework in Edmonton, I applied for a student visa to do research in Iran. I waited several months and found that the embassy had lost my application. Having no alternate plans at that point, I took a one year teaching position in Kuwait. During that year, I was able to make two trips into Iran. I visited local Luri anthropologist Dr. S. Amanolahi, and Dr. M. Raazi, then Director for International Student Affairs at Shiaaz University, and secured letters of recommendation from them which would aid in obtaining a visa. I also visited a Luri nomadic camp near the city of Esfehan, making known my intentions for research. I then applied for a visa at the Iranian embassy in Kuwait, and received it just a week before I was to leave there in June, 2000.

Research Phase Two

Beginnings in Shiraaz

Phase two took place in Iran, beginning in September, 2000. For the first while I was in Shiraaz learning Fārsi, getting used to the culture, and spending time in offices awaiting permission to go to the field location. Two months later I was ready to learn the Luri language and to begin cultural research, living in a Luri settlement about five hours northwest of Shirāz, in the Zagros mountains. I was required by government and university administrators in Shiraaz to spend part of every month in the city, reporting about my activities and applying for new visas and permission to return to the field. I used this time in the city for ongoing analysis, and to rework my research questions based on fresh data that I had gathered, aided by the perspective that a little distance can give.

Finding a Focus

As an ethnographic method, I employed participant observation for the general problem of discovering "the cultural knowledge people are using to organize their behaviour and interpret their experience" (Spradley, 1980, pp. 30-31). More specifically, I used a method of research known in symbolic anthropology, selecting a single symbol, in this case dream-telling, that occurs within several Luri contexts, through which to understand informal education and indigenous knowledge systems. J. P. Spradley's definition of a *topic oriented* ethnography suggests that such a symbol "narrows the focus to one or

more aspects of life known to exist in the community" (Spradley, 1980, p. 31). In other analyses these have been a ritual or phenomenon, as in Wolof greetings; an institution, for instance, the Finnish sauna; a place, such as the Afghan bazaar; a system, like Komachi kinship; an object, such as nomads' goat-hair tents or Inuit fishhooks; or in this case it was to be any symbol representative of the social situation of learning among the Lurs.

In symbolic anthropology, H. Applebaum (1987) writes, "symbols can take the form of public events, parades, funerals, tournaments, holidays, and... can draw upon any type of object or gesture" (p. 479). L. M. Helfgott (1994), who studied the social history of the Iranian carpet, states that symbolic actions or objects "function historically and socially as both reality and metaphor... reveal both human necessity and human desire... [and] express complex forms of social interaction" (pp. 1-2). Although I was not necessarily looking for an object or ritual as my point of study, the symbol of dream-telling most certainly functions as both reality and metaphor; it is central to understanding and it provides a framework for examining the process of learning in Luri society. I could not know this symbol for the specific Luri context, however, until I went there and discovered it; "the task of the ethnographer is to discover questions that seek the relationships among entities that are conceptually meaningful to the people under investigation" (Black & Metzger, as cited in Spradley, 1980, p. 32). The process of asking questions narrowed my focus to specific observations surrounding the dream-telling ritual, a symbol which is representative of informal learning in Luri society. Earlier in this paper, I outlined the criteria I used to select dream-telling as my focus. Once I had made this decision, I was able to describe how the particular symbol of dream-telling functions in the context as a mode of knowledge transmission. My choice of primary data resources was indicated by the symbol, and I observed how dream-telling was manifest in networks of institutions, among different actors, and through various activities.

The Ethnographic Research Cycle

The ethnographic research process demands that the researcher constantly, consciously alternate between observing and analysing: between looking at details of the questions and looking for overall patterns and trends emerging from the data. As mentioned, I

encountered this cycle physically as I traveled back and forth between village and city, and alternating between focussed observations and general analysis. The question and answer cycle oriented me towards completing a descriptive investigation of the cultural context of learning through dream-telling. The process was split into three research tasks: gathering, recording and analysing data.[2]

Data Gathering

Collecting data involved asking descriptive, structural, and contrast questions (Spradley, 1980, p. 32) about the activities, institutions, and actors that pass on knowledge in dream-telling. Through this, I made a sequence of *descriptive*, *focused*, and *selective* observations (Spradley, 1980, pp. 73ff., 100ff., 122ff.), keeping in mind that an ethnographic data source may be a person, a group, a document, an artefact, an event, a place, or virtually anything that contains cultural meanings (even myself as a participant observer). In preparation for analysis, I took an inventory of all the possible cultural domains I could study, based on the symbol of dream-telling. A sample of the kinds of questions I was seeking to answer about dream-telling through participant observation can be found in Appendix A.

As D. Bradburd (1998) points out, ethnographers cannot claim to have an accurate method of knowing unless they are committed to just "being there," living with the people and living like them so that their mindset is intimately understood. I joined in every possible aspect of Luri daily life, from washing clothes in the river to making flatbread over a fire to gathering acorns from the wild mountain oaks. Taking part in activities as much as possible in the same ways my informants participated facilitated my understanding of the emic meanings of the activities, actors and institutions of their culture. To this end I listened to many dreams being told and interpreted, went with people as they gave offerings, attended *sarkeshi*s, and even submitted a few of my own dreams to the elders.

Formal ethnographic interviews were performed during the last two months of fieldwork, after I had already developed ideas about the cultural themes from doing participant

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[2] These three tasks often occurred simultaneously and were indistinguishable from one another, but for the purposes of describing them here, I have separated them.

observation. I did many informal interviews by asking direct, contextual questions throughout the fieldwork time, but for the formal interviews I selected fifteen informants. The interviewees were eight women and seven men, of various ages, and represented a cross-section of the Luri population in terms of education and occupation. A profile of informants for the formal ethnographic interviews can be found in Appendix G. Although the sample of informants was chosen carefully, the formal interviews were not meant to be an end in themselves, but rather to supplement the findings of ethnographic study.

Data Recording

Recording data is essential to the method as it relates to the steps of gathering and analyzing information. Records utilise means of taking fieldnotes, photographs and audio recordings, as well as making maps and charts. I kept a record divided into sections: fieldnotes (containing research questions and primary data) and a journal (including synthesis of data, thoughts about hypotheses, and these informing new questions and checks on analysis). The fieldnotes and journal entries included information about the process of discovering the symbol, descriptions of the physical setting, ongoing observations of the cultural scene, descriptions of particular symbolic cultural domains and then several contrasting domains. The journal also described the development of research, noting useful techniques related to the orientation of investigation, such as how it became necessary to do ethnographic interviews, as well as making observations. The fieldnotes, specifically, contained maps of particular areas, informal interviews with key informants, and other detailed observations. I kept track of 87 informants in a database, noting among other relevant details their tribal affiliations and relationships, occupation and education, special titles, language, hometown and birthplace.

I also made use of a database to catalogue and index all the dreams I heard being told. In this I recorded the date I first heard a dream; identities of the dreamer, audience, and interpreters; the context for telling; any subsequent tellings; the actual dream as it is told (quoted if possible, or transcribed and translated from an audio recording); dominant representations, characters, and values in the dream-tellings; conclusions listeners drew

and any actions prescribed; interpretations; results if known; other dreams told that were related by similar subject; and further questions I had. For ease of use, I created an index of all 88 dreams that were told and recorded, with hyperlinks to the texts in English.

When I did the formal ethnographic interviews at the end of phase two, I used a minidisk audio recorder, to ensure that I didn't miss any details, and so that I could listen naturally to the informants as they spoke. Recording the interviews made them seem more like conversations, and helped to put the informants at ease. They also enjoyed using the technology, and hearing themselves afterward.

At every step, I wrote cultural descriptions, synthesizing analysed data to formulate hypotheses and new questions. Completing the research cycle, I then took the hypotheses and questions back to the field for testing.

Data Analysis

Because of the cyclical nature of ethnographic research, data analysis is a continuous process; it is not done after all data are collected, but at intervals or simultaneous to their collection and recording. J. P. Spradley (1980) describes four kinds of analysis to be done: domain, taxonomic, componential, and theme analysis. All of these prescribe examination of the data in search of patterns in cultural knowledge. To direct my observations toward specific questions, I had several questions in mind for observation and analysis; these are found in Table 1 which follows.

Table 1: *Questions for Observation and Analysis*

- how does the dream's subject relate to the conversation?
- how is the dream introduced? presented? concluded?
- how is the dream received by others?
- what conclusions do people draw from the dream?
- what are the identities of the dreamer, the teller, and the interpreter?
- what is the subject and content of dreams as they are told?
- what subjects, characters, and values recur in dream-tellings?
- how do people categorize different types of dreams?
- what features make a dream a certain type?
- what is dreams' authority derived from?
- what are the intended and incidental functions of dream-telling?
- what is the relevance of dreams to social concerns (context in which they are told, and reasons why they are told)?
- what discourse types and features are employed specifically in dream-telling?
- what are the roles and functions of dream-telling and dream-interpreting?

A cultural domain is a category of cultural meaning that can be subdivided. A list of all the domains that I examined is found in Table 2, on the next page. Domain analysis suggests discovering the semantic relationships between and among the various elements in a cultural domain, taxonomic analysis looks at ordering the categories of culture, componential analysis considers the meanings in contrasts, and theme analysis regards the principles which guide cultural behaviour. All analyses were verified and clarified by repetition of the ethnographic research cycle.

Of all the domains I studied, I concentrated on three in particular: reasons for telling a dream, results of telling a dream, and things one learns from dreams in the context of telling. I formulated interview questions around these domains specifically, after doing the domain analysis: finding all the elements ("included terms") comprised by a particular domain ("cover term") through a particular semantic relationship; each of these were charted in a domain analysis worksheet. I discovered the themes by analyzing the dimensions of contrast among domains. Within the domains, I looked at what the included terms had as common features and also what distinguished them from one another.

These then emerged as underlying principles that could describe generalities in the culture. The results of the four analyses are found in Chapter Four of this study.

Table 2: *Dream-telling Domains Selected for Analysis*

1. causes of having a valid or invalid dream
2. characteristics of a good interpreter
3. characteristics of a good dream-teller
4. characteristics of a good dream-listener
5. kinds of characters in dreams
6. kinds of dreams
7. kinds of dream-listeners
8. kinds of dream-tellers
9. kinds of informal learning institutions
10. parts of a dream-teller's role
11. parts of a dream-listener's role
12. parts of an interpreter's role
13. places/times/contexts for telling a dream
14. reasons for not telling a dream
15. reasons for telling a dream
16. results of having a dream
17. results of telling a (good/bad) dream
18. roles in dream-telling
19. steps in telling a dream
20. things one learns from dreams as they are told
21. things one sees in dreams
22. ways to deal with a bad dream
23. ways to dream
24. ways to prevent the results of a bad dream
25. ways to promote the results of a good dream (*xèili begozāre*)
26. ways to tell a dream

Research Phase Three

Finally, following preliminary research and field research, the third phase back in Canada involved several months of transcribing and translating the informal and formal ethnographic interviews, conclusive analysis, revisions, and write-up of the ethnography and thesis. As D. Bradburd notes, this is a major task, which involves accurate communication "helping others whose experience is only vicarious really understand what the anthropologist's own experience was all about" (Bradburd, 1998, p.162). Giving an authentic account of the ethnographic experience is the capstone to careful participant observation and detailed analysis.

The first section of Chapter Four is a description of the dream-telling ritual, its structure and functions. The second section of Chapter Four deals with the results of the theme analysis. The data evidence seven major cultural themes. These are semantically grouped into three classes for elegance of communication: control and authority; social status, reputation, and saving face; and community identity and social relationships. For each of the three classes, two dream-tellings, or conversations about dreams, drawn from participant obervation fieldnotes and both formal and informal interviews, are chosen as exhibiting prototypical qualities of the themes that are discussed. These examples are quoted at the beginning of each class as a means of focussing the reader on direct data, which then serve as reference texts for the theme sections following.

Ethical Considerations

Four main ethical considerations appear to be of importance to this research: cultural and intellectual property rights, representation, confidentiality, and impact.

Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights

In order to protect the intellectual and cultural property rights of my informants, I was candid with them regarding my intentions for research. I acquainted all potential informants with my research in accordance with article 2.4 of the *Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Humans* (University of Alberta, 2000). The informant consent form I used is found in Appendix C. Certain information was unavailable to me due to my identity as an outsider. In cases where informants defined certain knowledge as sacred or inaccessible, I respected such limitations; I gave proper attention to private information

or property belonging to the group. I recorded my experiences of situations in which specific community protocol is to be observed. For example, in two instances, informants asked me not to audio-record interviews, but they consented to have me write what they said. As outlined in the *Guidelines*, the research proposal for this study was reviewed by the research ethics board of the University of Alberta, as well as being approved by Shirāz University, the Iranian government, and local authorities in the tribal area who represented agencies "having jurisdiction over the site of the research" (University of Alberta, 2000, Article 1.13).

I intend to provide my completed thesis and any other publications to these entities, in the case of the tribe by placing a manuscript in an accessible and agreed upon repository, with the head clan in the area. I also made transcripts and other data available to the informants, if they wished to access them. In many cases the informants wished to listen to themselves speaking in the recorded interviews, and this was done immediately afterward.

Representation

So that the Lurs would be fairly represented in this account, and indeed in the interests of accuracy, I employed cross-examination of data with other sources (e.g. informants, literature, research, scholars), as well as checking my findings as much as possible with a local anthropologist, who is himself a Lur. I consulted many informants, but particularly those who are Lurs, for their relevant expertise. As previously discussed, the dialogical and cyclical nature of ethnography obliged me to continually question my observations.

Confidentiality

Ethnography, as a form of naturalistic observation, must respect the privacy and dignity of the people it investigates. Due regard was given in this study to the anonymity of informants, by obscuring, or omitting from publication, identities and such contextual details as were not directly relevant to the research. No mention will be made, in forthcoming publications, of the specific names of villages, informants, or particular characteristics thereof, excepting those that contribute to the research. I ensured confidentiality of information at all times, and secured informants' free, informed consent at both the beginning and end of the research (see Appendix C). This was difficult

considering the political climate of Iran and the position of tribal peoples within it. Government officials constantly questioned me about my work and personal life, demanding the names and telephone numbers of anyone I met or visited. Nevertheless, I was able to maintain the security of my data and informants, at times only by refusing to speak Fārsi.

Since *written* consent was often neither culturally nor practically feasible, I have here documented the procedures used to seek free and informed consent for such cases. Potential informants listened to a recording of the consent form in Luri (see the written version in Appendix C), and then included an oral "autograph" signifying consent at the beginning of their recorded interview. Although my role as an outsider was obvious to my informants, I made every effort to clarify the purposes of my research. I was open to their expressed concerns at any point in the study. In order to maintain my informants' trust in the research community, I had a debriefing with each after all the data were collected, in which I gave them the opportunity to react to my findings; due consideration was given to their responses.

Impact

For a social scientist, assessing one's impact on the culture bears a significance akin to isolating the variables in a more closed experiment. By adapting to the culture and language learned through reading, talking, and living with people, it is hoped that the researcher's influence was as minimal as possible. With this statement, however, it is as important to realise that no society is isolated from outside influence. Change must not occur haphazardly at the hands of national economists, modernist developers, urban bureaucrats and rulers who despise traditional ways, but rather after careful consideration of the people's own voice and cultural meanings. Thus one of the meaning of ethics in the research process is ensuring that the people are heard.

Limitations

Although learning Fārsi and Luri provided me with many advantages, I must assume that the limitations of my ability in the local language weakened the study, reducing my understanding of more subtle details of the language and culture. Bureaucracy kept me from being in the village as much as I would have liked during the nine months in Iran; I

was required to have permission from various authorities before going out to the tribal area each time. This drastically shortened the time I had to spend with people, and therefore I had to work harder to gain their trust. As it was, gaining the Lurs' trust was difficult because they were used to having government agents come and question them, and they couldn't think of any reason that a foreigner would want to talk with them other than to spy for one government or another. It is possible that this— their perception of my motivation—generated the politically acceptable and religious tones of some of their answers. In the end, because my research visa was not renewed, I had a limited amount of time in which to complete the final formal interviews. People were quite accommodating, but more time for reflection and revisions between each formal interview, as well as more time for analysis in the field, would have improved the study. As it happened, subsequent to my return to Canada, I was able to have only very limited contact with the Luri community.

Delimitations

The research for this study was done with one group of Luri people in Iran. Textual sources referred to in the literature suggest that the findings here may be similar to those of other cultural groups but it is necessary to recognize this bounding of the formal research.

The research is delimited to this group in another sense. It is not a comparative study, and no attempt has been made to gather comparative data. As much as possible implicit or explicit comparisons to other peoples in Iran are omitted, simply because they have not been a focus of this study.

Finally, as noted earlier, the research question and focus is sharply on the dream-telling experience. The data about dreams that are presented are data about dreams 'as told', and thus all comments and analysis refer to that particular social behaviour. It would take a quite different study to address dreaming itself.

CHAPTER FOUR: TELLING DREAMS

Lurs are telling dreams, and dreams are telling them, about the most important elements of their culture. This chapter presents the ethnographic data in two parts: firstly, by describing in detail both the structure and function of the ritual of dream-telling, and further, by examining the Luri cognitive map in terms of the cultural themes conveyed and learned through dream-telling.

Description of the Dream-Telling Ritual

The Importance of Telling a Dream

Learning is an event that takes place not only in schools, but in all areas of life. Although they are sometimes unaware of this, people are constantly engaged in teaching and learning about themselves and the world around them: about the ways of life, about cause and effect, about what is good and right, and about dealing with difficulties. In the Luri mindset, knowledge comes about as a result of *sargozashta* 'experience.' While many Lurs acknowledge the benefits of formal schooling in the national system, especially as regards work opportunities, they also stress the importance of living among their elders and learning from them. Commonly, oaths such as those spoken in the Luri wedding ceremony require the tacit permission of the elders. And it is the elders who are consulted on matters ranging widely: from the meanings of dreams, to the best passage through the mountains to summer quarters.

Learning institutions, similarly, are not only composed of brick walls. Learning cannot be separated from its socio-cultural context. In fact, every society has its own systems of socialization, authority structures, and social control mechanisms, and all of these are involved in the social process of learning. Although it may seem that formal education, with all its authority and power, is replacing many indigenous learning institutions, learning often continues to be more effectively carried out through existing social networks (Van der Wal, 1998). It is within this context that the dream-telling ritual finds its place in Luri culture.

Living as nomadic people, the Lurs' lives are uncertain, and ritual dream-telling is a method to counteract this uncertainty. Rituals, anthropologists tell us, re-enact experiences as symbolic expressions of beliefs; they are the conventional practice of

symbolic meaning. They function to transmit information from generation to generation, through informal learning. They reinforce social bonds and provide an opportunity for people to participate in community life, thereby affirming group identity. Rituals also help people to deal with life's inherent contradictions and ambiguity. By embodying a system for categorizing knowledge and for labelling elements as more or less important, rituals enable people to relate to both the natural (or non-human) world and the social world. For the Lurs, the dream-telling ritual connects the two worlds. It puts dream content, which is considered natural (or non-human) and uncontrollable, into a social context, so that it can be dealt with, explained, and ultimately controlled.

Structure of the Dream-telling Ritual

The initialising event of the dream-telling ritual is deciding whether or not a dream should be told at all, and this can best be described with reference to the "Dream Analysis Chart" (see Figure 1). This is a flowchart depicting the thought processes of the Lurs when they are deciding what is to be done about a dream they have had. The cognitive process of dream analysis for the Lurs is a mental representation shared widely by members of the Luri culture. An individual will go through the first stages of the process himself or herself, and at some point consult others. The audience, whether consisting of one person or several, asks questions and gives an interpretation. A dreamer can then choose to consult other interpreters or not, and to act upon an interpretation or not.

The dream-telling ritual begins when a Lur has a dream. At first it will exist only in the dreamer's mind; indeed, it may end there also, if the dream is not to be told, that is if the dream is not 'valid'. In the first stage of determining validity, the dreamer examines the dream according to the criteria of ingestions, feelings, and timing. If the dreamer had eaten any 'discomforting' food or taken any medications before going to sleep, his or her dream is disqualified. Likewise, if the dreamer had been feeling too much desire, fear, thoughtfulness, or expectation, the dream will not be heeded. In contrast, dreams that take place on certain nights, such as a Friday night, *qorbān* 'sacrifice' night, *qabr* 'grave' night, or dark night, are more likely to be considered valid. Once the dream passes this first "test" determining its validity, the dreamer will try to establish whether the dream is good or bad and the dream's "straightness," or predictive accuracy. This stage of the

process usually occurs after the dream has been told, and it is others in the listening group who provide these interpretations.

But validity is not the only factor the dreamer must consider before deciding to tell his or her dream. Not all dreams are told. Telling a dream depends on the dreamer's evaluation about its worth in terms of the cultural themes outlined in the next section of this chapter. Dreams may be told in order to contribute to the community's identity or to maintain social relations within it. Examples of these would include providing for fellowship among people, warning someone of danger, demonstrating that the dreamer trusts a listener, and comforting or encouraging a friend. Dreams are also told for personal reasons, such as to enhance one's status or reputation, to draw attention to oneself, or to control a conversation. Sometimes people want to confirm or validate an internal desire, or to justify a case. For example, if someone wishes to better their religious standing by going on a pilgrimage, a dream instructing them to go on a pilgrimage certainly suffices as grounds for the journey. Many times, people want to receive the comfort or peace that comes from disclosing a bad dream, or to share their happiness after a good dream.

Once he has decided to tell his dream, the dreamer must then determine the right context for sharing it. The most prominent of contextual cues are subject, occasion and opportunity. On a subject cue, a dreamer will tell his dream because the subject is being discussed and the dream is relevant. This was the case when people at a tea gathering were discussing Majnun's illness, and Mahsā told of her dream about him falling ill. Regarding the cue of occasion, we may cite the instance when Noshin told her dream about her husband, Firuz, getting in a truck collision. She told the dream before he left on his journey to the city that day in order to warn him of the danger.[1] Another cue for when to tell a dream is simply at the first good opportunity; this occurs when a dream is particularly exciting or meaningful. For example, when Shirin dreamed that her sister went on a pilgrimage to Pereshkaft, it was a very good omen, and so she told her sister as soon as she awoke.[2]

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[1] Noshin, in "Near Driving Accident"
[2] Shirin, in "Pereshkaft Pilgrimage"

As noted above, usually dream-telling happens after the dreamer has determined that the dream is valid; thereafter he can allow others to help decide whether the dream is good or bad, whether it is straight or lying, and what the corresponding course of action will be. Dream-telling rarely happens outside of a specific social context, and it is typically during a *sarkeshi* 'head-pulling' or tea gathering. In the evening, after the day's work is done, three to fifteen people who are related by clan or by co-residence in a camp or village gather in the living room of a hospitable member's tent or stone house. After the usual round of greetings and polite expressions, they seat themselves on the carpet in an oval ordered by social status, recline on oversized cushions and drink small glasses of tea. They discuss a range of subjects, usually centring on the local news, their children, animals, houses, crops, social relations, politics, folktales, or riddles. Then someone says "*xaw didom tā...*" ("in sleep, I see...") and all ears are tuned to the dream-teller.

After the dreamer calls for the attention of the audience, she makes the connection between her dream and the subject of conversation apparent. She then describes the waking circumstances of the dream, to convince her audience that all was well so that the dream is right to be told. A dream can be told in a couple of sentences or in an epic-length monologue. The present tense is generally used to bring the audience into the dreamer's state of mind as the dream unfolds. The dreamer recounts her dream and tells about its results if they have become apparent. Sometimes she interprets the dream herself, and gives a moral or lesson to be learned, but more often she invites others to interpret it. Discussion ensues, and other related dreams are offered for comparison. Like judicial precedents, similar dreams and their results may lend a prediction for the outcome of the dream at hand.

Telling a dream on a subject cue involves highlighting the relevant parts, but in any case dreams are told in a fairly straightforward manner; descriptive details of the scene are left out, and dreamers talk simply about who did what, and their reactions and feelings. It is the people and their actions in dreams which determine meanings, and which are considered to be most important, not impersonal details. After the dreamer is finished relating the dream, the audience responds with questions and comments similar to those asked of herself by the dreamer when she tests the dream's validity: "Weren't you taking those tablets from the clinic?"... "You had too much desire."... "But what night did you

have this dream?" The community has its criteria and its standards for interpretation, and its members collectively decide what is to be concluded from the individual's dream. The Lurs' unique system of analysis is outlined in Figure 1.

The audience listens to the dream being told, and then usually discusses it (if there is more than one person). The members ask questions to verify a dream's validity, goodness, and "straightness" (predictive accuracy). They then give an interpretation and propose an associated action to be performed by the dreamer. If there is a group of people listening to the dream being told, the interpretation is left to the most experienced of them. Of course, the same dream might be interpreted in a number of ways by different people, but the interpretation will always be within the bounds of Luri culture. Those of lower status in the analysis game defer to those who have had much experience and success in dream interpretation. If the dream is particularly bad, listeners will attempt to invalidate it by citing various factors, such as spicy food eaten or night time thoughtfulness on the part of the dreamer. The best kind of dream interpreter, according to the Lurs, has much *aql* ('intelligence') and *omr* ('life experience'), is a close friend or family member, and has "given good answers" (dream interpretations) many times before.

The dream-teller welcomes the audience's contributions, for it helps him to know what, if anything, he must do. Their suggestions for action vary; sometimes it is to tell the dream to other people, and sometimes it is to not tell it. Sometimes it is to "go under a green tree and pray;" sometimes it is "*ye sadaqa bede!*" ('give an offering'). These actions are performed to influence the results of the dream. If a dream is bad, the dreamer's actions will be done to negate its effects. This may be to give a social offering (*narz*), taking fruit or sweets around to neighbours and friends and asking them to pray a blessing to prevent the dream from coming true. Or the dreamer may give a religious offering (*sadaqa*), trusting that this will compel God to work his supernatural powers in turning the bad dream into good. Sometimes a dreamer will resort to telling the bad dream while giving her own interpretation of it as good; this tactic does not always work if it is not convincing enough. If a dream is good, the dreamer tries to promote the effects of the dream to ensure that it comes to happen. Often, a good dream will also be told repeatedly, and in various contexts, in order to multiply its social benefits.

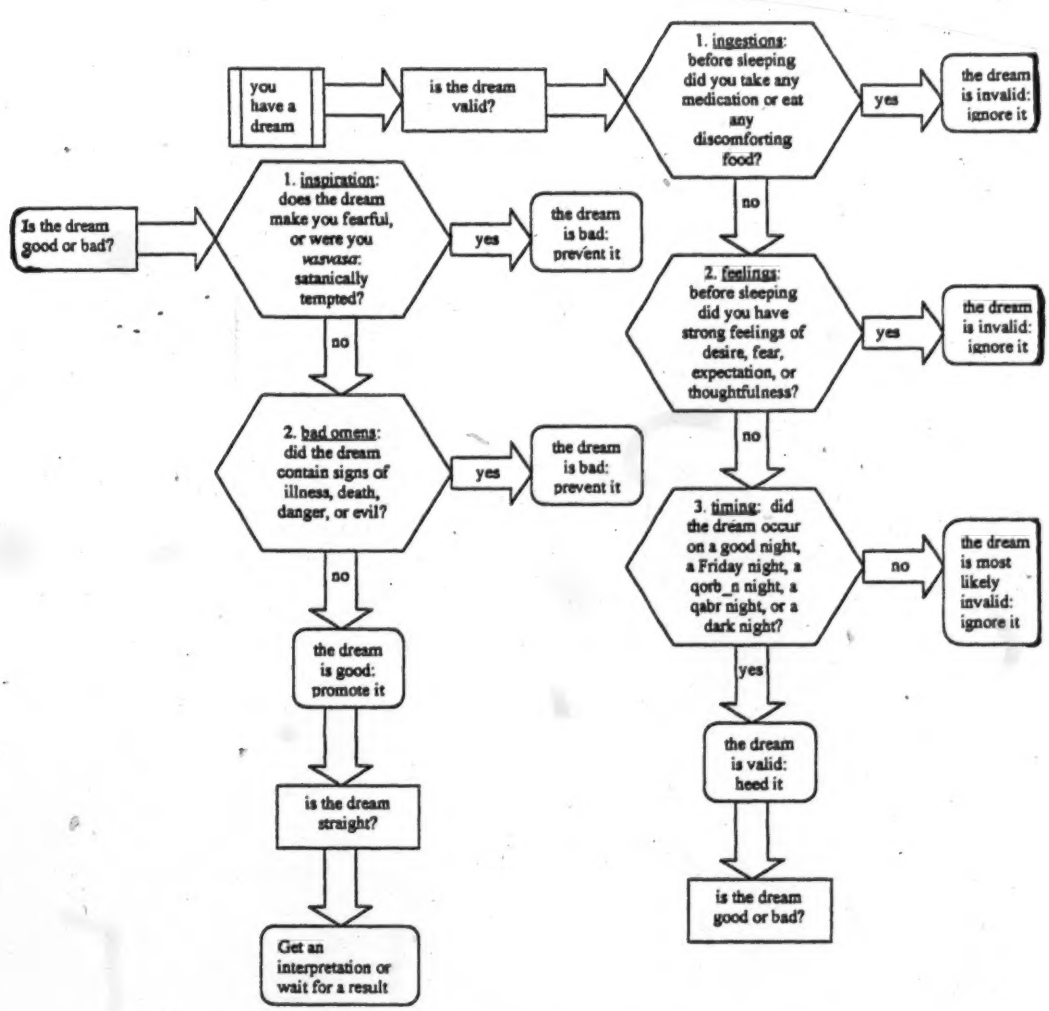
you have a dream
is the dream valid?
1. ingestions: before sleeping did you take any medication or eat any discomforting food?
yes
the dream is invalid: ignore it
no
2. feelings: before sleeping did you have strong feelings of desire, fear, expectation, or thoughtfulness?
yes
the dream is invalid: ignore it
no
3. timing: did the dream occur on a good night, a Friday night, a qorb_n night, a qabr night, or a dark night?
no
the dream is most likely invalid: ignore it
yes
the dream is valid: heed it
is the dream good or bad?
Is the dream good or bad?
1. inspiration: does the dream make you fearful, or were you waswasa: satanically tempted?
yes
the dream is bad: prevent it
no
2. bad omens: did the dream contain signs of illness, death, danger, or evil?
yes
the dream is bad: prevent it
no
the dream is good: promote it
is the dream straight?
Get an interpretation or wait for a result

Figure 1. **Luri Dream Analysis Chart**

Cultural Themes

Luri Ways of Knowing

As noted in the introduction and literature review chapter, a cognitive map is very similar to what other scholars' call *worldview*, *cultural model*, or *indigenous knowledge system.* Laszlo *et al.* use the term to designate the individual's mental representations of the world, including conceptual categories of knowledge or cultural themes. In this section the results of doing an ethnographic analysis of substance of the dream as told in a dream-telling are presented a cultural themes.

These Luri cultural themes are presented in three broad classes, each one with an indigenous label: *dasgā:* control and authority; *awru*: social status, reputation, and saving face; and *xomuni*: community identity and social relationships. Each class of themes is begun by highlighting two long quotes from informants, as examples of dream-tellings prototypical of the theme being discussed.

dasgā: Control and Authority

Noshin's Fair Warning

> *Sometimes when I dream, I dream about my husband who is traveling; my husband is a [professional] driver. One night I dreamed that he had left, but he had made a mistake and gotten into an auto accident; so in the morning when I awoke, I gave a sadaqa ('religious offering'). In faith, I put a sadaqa into the box, and I said to him, "sir, do not make the trip today." I dreamed it. From this, we knew that we must give a sadaqa and that was a warning that he should not travel. If I hadn't given a sadaqa, probably he would have died. That's how it is. We give a sadaqa in order to make our dreams become good (xeir). Because this dream turned out well, today something good will come to me instead, all because we gave that sadaqa. In the right path of God, if we give a sadaqa, we know that good will come of it.* (Noshin)

Make This Dream Good

> *If we dream something bad, like an auto accident, a problem, something else bad, the next day when we wake up we put an offering (sadaqa) in the box, and we say a prayer to God, then it actually becomes gone, from that very moment of our giving the offering, it becomes gone, that bad dream! ...Because if you have a bad dream or a worrisome dream, you don't tell it to everyone. Perhaps to*

someone who is right minded, it is correct [to tell it to them], but otherwise we don't tell it. We go under a green tree, we do the oblations and the salvād prayer, we tell it to that tree, and we say, "O God, You yourself must make this dream good, so that it shall surely come to pass." Yes, and then of course we tell it to our families. When I dream I go before my sister Susanak, and I say to her that I dreamed last night, and my sister says that this dream is good. Then, in order for it to happen just that same good way, I agree with her, and say, "yes, it's good, sister, it's good. God willing, it's good." For example, no, I wouldn't tell some of my relatives, because I fear very much that they will say it was bad. I said to my sister that last night I dreamed she was sick. It seemed that she was hurting, in this dream. But it doesn't matter. It will become good. It's good! That interpretation made it good. But, maybe, in this very same way, a person could make an interpretation of the dream as bad. They could say that this dream I had last night, this dream is very bad; it's possible that some trouble will come of it. That's also not good. As I said, the dream is bad. We should only tell dreams to someone special that is intelligent, and they will interpret well. (Azāda)

Control

The dream-telling ritual explains the unknown and controls outcomes. One problem human societies seek to solve is what to do with those aspects of life which are overwhelming because they are too powerful or beyond comprehension. If we can only explain them to ourselves in a way that seems to make sense and that we can all (in a community) agree upon, these problems become much less intimidating. So we, in culture, develop elaborate explanation and guidance systems, known to anthropologists as cultural cognitive maps.

Dream-telling is just that for the Luri people. Tellings of dreams record unknowable and sometimes incomprehensible events, and life gives us unexplainable hardships and catastrophes, as well as good fortune and benefit. Making sense out of such things, for the Lurs, involves the telling, interpreting, and acting out of dreams. Farā advises on this: "whatever kind of dream we have, we must bind it (*bebandesh*) [i.e. act to control its outcome], and we must tell it." Ultimately, of course, dreams are as Noshin says "a divine vision," thus their results are "from the hand of God." And, as Sorāyā points out, even when you report a dream, "nothing can completely prevent a dream from

happening; it's just the will of God (*nazar-e xodā*)." However, even though God is viewed as the supreme power, humans also have some power they can wield in their lives. Rites of control are indicated for the thwarting of a bad dream or for the actualising of a good dream (see Figure 2). An elaborate system of interpretation, in which the unexpected is often reality, portrays both the insecurity of the Lurs' lives and the strategies they use to control them. Shahnāz quotes a well known aspect of this unexpectedness: "*shādi vābu shivān, shivān vābu shādi.*" Joy becomes sorrow, sorrow becomes joy [in opposite dreams]."

Like every society, the Lurs try to make sense of the distressing and obscure aspects of their lives, and dream-telling facilitates the process. After her uncle died, Golnar dreamed that he appeared among a group of grieving relatives, beckoning them and asking them to exchange their black clothes for white ones, because his "white soul" was upset by their mourning. Death somehow became less frightening to the family when Golnar told this dream.[3]

The theme of control is also evident in Luri religious, political and social systems. God is viewed as having absolute control, and the government and religious establishment have nearly absolute control, but control is also an important value in the community and family. That the Lurs have a culture of high social control is evident in the many formal structures in place to institute hierarchical power. The public school and the local religious shrine (*emāmzāda*), which employ mainly Luri teachers, are foci for propagating correct ideology. Marriage partners are more or less chosen by one's parents, often from a young age and usually from among one's kindred. Families are structured according to age and sex roles and these determine an individual's place in the community as well. In the extended family, many members are integrated into the national security system, by the obtaining of employment within one of the numerous levels of government: military, clergy, revolutionary guard (*sepāh*), police (gendarmerie), intelligence (*hāfezāt-e etelā'āt*), and religious "morality guidance" (*ershād-e eslāmi*).

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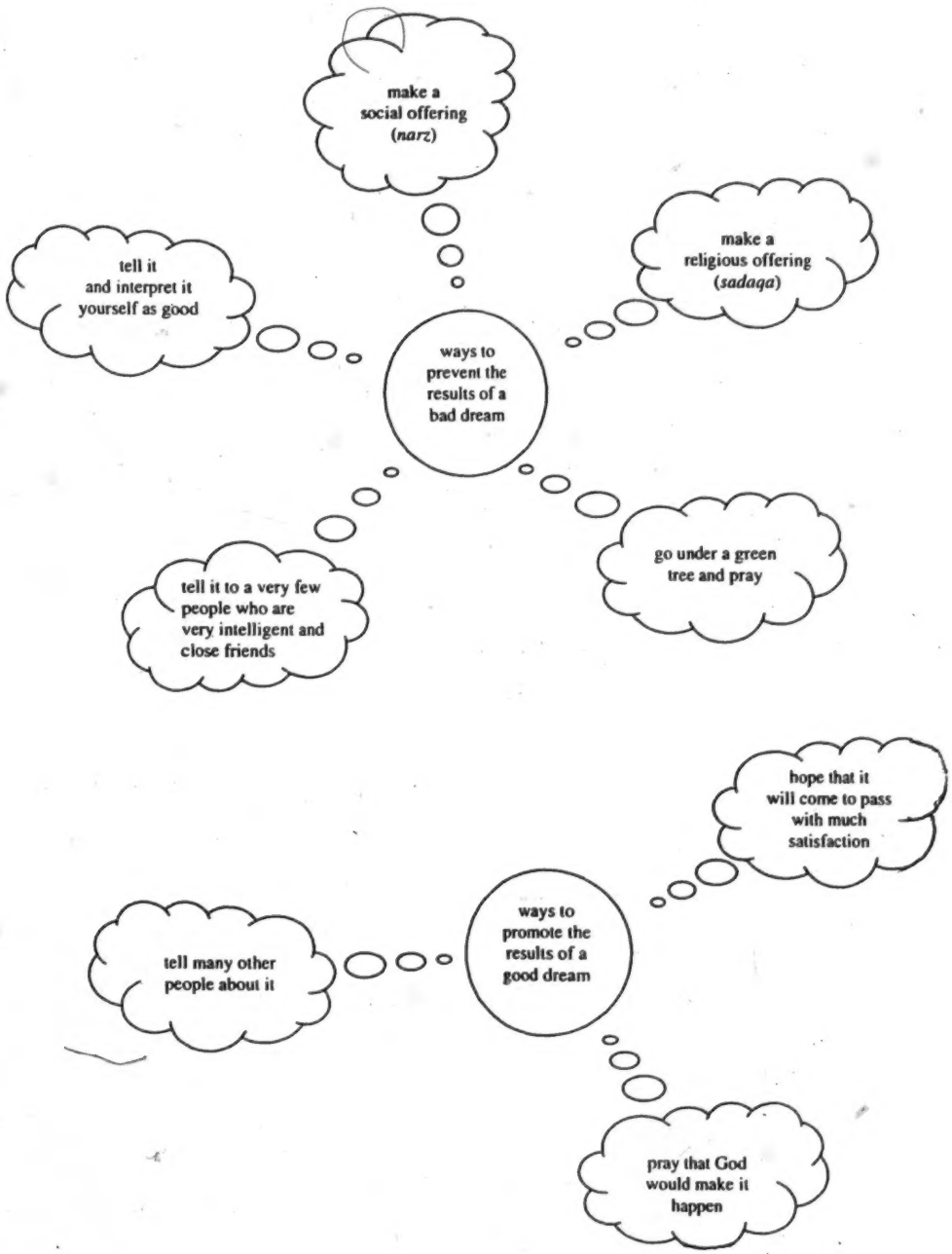
[3] Azāda, of Golnar's dream "Uncle Irāj and the Mourning"

Figure 2. **Dealing with the Results of Bad Dreams and Good Dreams**


make a social offering (narz)
tell it and interpret it yourself as good
make a religious offering (sadaqa)
ways to prevent the results of a bad dream
tell it to a very few people who are very intelligent and close friends
go under a green tree and pray
hope that it will come to pass with much satisfaction
ways to promote the results of a good dream
tell many other people about it
pray that God would make it happen

The dream-telling ritual also reflects the cultural theme of control. The Luri system for classification of dream types, revealed in the ritual of telling, has as one of its criteria whether or not a person can do something to control the dream's outcome. Again, as the Lurs say, there are certain acts which, if performed before the dream, can render it a certain type; for example, calm thoughts, eating the right food, and generally being in good health both physically and emotionally make a dream-telling more valid, acceptable to the audience, and likely to influence waking life. This illustrates how important it is for people to use such powers as they have to direct their own lives. It is a crucial aspect of self-determination for the Lurs. One can also observe the control theme demonstrated in the telling of dreams about such situations as natural disasters and actions of government and of other higher powers. In "Drowned in a Water Dish," for example, Behyār dreams that he spills a dish of water. His telling of this serves as a warning of a force that is not otherwise knowable: the next morning the village was overtaken by a flash flood from the mountain.[4] Dream-telling in this context becomes a way to deal with, and even counteract, the uncontrollable.

Farshād also notes:

> *There are some bad dreams, which, for example, may cause upset, so that we only say to them [the dream's subjects] that they should give a* sadaqa *[ritual offering]. Less often we tell them such a dream; we don't report the dream to them in such a case, we just tell them to give a* sadaqa. *Because if it's a good dream, we must give thanks, and if it's a bad dream, we must give a* sadaqa *so that God will distance the evil from us. Of course, if we dream about something good, we only give thanks; since we are happy, we give thanks. However, if it is bad, we do both: give a* sadaqa *and say a prayer, so that God will return it with goodness (*xeir*). That's how it is.* (Farshād)

Azāda concurs, "Dreams that are bad, we are fearful of them," but dream-telling allows the Lurs to have some means of countering this anxiety. The dream-telling ritual, in

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[4] Behyār, in "Drowned in a Water Dish"

terms of its social and religious offerings (*narzi o sadaqa*), prayers, and other control mechanisms, functions to manipulate the outcomes of occurrences that are not generally within the power of ordinary society.

Obviously the Luri system must account for the existence of varying degrees of power exercised by different segments of the society, and answer the question of who has control and how it is appointed to them.

Authority

The dream-telling ritual bestows authority on its participants.

The Luri authority structure presents a dichotomy that is, in fact, a reflection of their history. The Lurs were subjugated by the Persians in the last century and continuing until the present, Iranian political authorities have discouraged nomadism and other aspects of the cultures of its minority ethnic groups. The tribes were been feared as a decentralizing force in the Pahlavi Shahs' time (until 1979), as well as more recently in the Islamic Republic (Banuazizi & Weiner, 1986, p. 210). Although the Lurs were denied any part in the Shah's system, they saw their opportunity in the Islamic Republic to gain power despite their lack of education, for they were able to summon the necessary religious zeal. Thus, in the city of Shirāz, the Lurs are often resented by majority peoples because their loyalty to the Islamic government has been rewarded with positions of authority.

Dream-telling, however, is a form of bypassing the national authority structure because dreams intrinsically convey an authority by the supernatural, a power greater than human political systems. Sviri (in Shulman & Stroumsa, 1999) notes that, throughout Islamic history, "it was universally accepted that those who had cultivated their inner faculties and insights could decipher the encoded messages of their own dreams as well as those of others" (p. 252). She explains that these insights are divine inspiration (*ilham*) granted to those who are called the "friends of God" (*awliya' allah*). In contrast, Persian mullahs discourage the Lurs from practising the dream-telling ritual. Thus, even though dream-telling is overtly sanctioned by Islam, its particular form among the Lurs belies a resistance toward the majority, because dreams cannot ultimately be controlled by outsiders.

Although other domains of Luri oral culture, such as storytelling, poetry, and music, have been appropriated by the Republic, especially through the schools, dream-telling continues in its indigeneity because it appeals to a power that is beyond the reach of even the clergy. Dream-telling as an oral tradition is quite like storytelling and other forms of cultural learning. However, because dreams are supposed to be either supernaturally inspired or at least *not* controlled by the conscious self, they hold more authority and believed significance. Stories, poems, and music are more easily censored, as well, because they are consciously created. They are more subject to being informally regulated by the normative values of the national culture. For example, if someone were to tell a *story* about the Prophet Mohammed speaking falsely, they would be prosecuted for blasphemy. In contrast, one informant in this study did tell a *dream* in which the Prophet made the same false prediction three times. Even so, the dreamer could not be blamed, and was not, because he did not consciously create the dream. In fact, such countercultural dreams are seen as having a greater air of gravity and believability about them, precisely because of their unknown or supernatural origins. Dreams are said to be divine: either *az dassxodā* 'from the hand of God' or *vasvasa* 'satanically inspired'. It follows, then, that if a person is not accountable for his dream, he is not under threat of being punished for telling the messages it sends.

Here we may note the conflict between national authority and its indigenous counterpart; people who are connected with national power systems often disclaim the authority of the dream-telling institution, even while they participate fully in it. They refuse to abandon it and thereby suffer losing the control it provides. Homāyun illustrates this paradox by declaring that dreams have no bearing on everyday life, and then going on to tell his dream and what he was obliged to do about its effects.

Because this segregation within the worldview can be disturbing, some Lurs have adopted a rival, parallel trend in the form of incorporation; they have sought to sanitize the image of dream-telling by cloaking it in religious garb and syncretising it with dominant Shi'a thought. There are, for example, authoritative dreams about *emāms* (Shi'a saints) and pilgrimages, and claims that dreams are divine. Elders and *sayyeds*— those with bloodlines of religiously prestigious families— are the most sought-after interpreters for dreams. Appeals to religion come in the form of interpretations extracted

from the Qur'ān, and truthfulness is gauged by the authorization of holy scriptures: "*neveshta*" 'it is written [in the Qur'ān]' is a common claim to rights. Behyār once told of his dream that he was invited to be a pilgrim to the holy shrine at Mashhad by the *Emām* Reza himself![5] [6] Sometimes dreams even sanction desirable actions, and the telling of such dreams gives the dreamer permission to perform them. Zeinaw explains, "if while dreaming you find that one of the *emāms* has given you a message, you must follow after that dream. For I dreamed that [a figure in a dream] said to me, "Madam, why haven't you gone on pilgrimage to the emām['s shrine]? And so I quite rightly asked, "Who are you?" and he said, "I am Abelfarz," and since he was an *emām*, and that night was a good night, and I was clean, there were no problems, I hadn't eaten any discomforting food, it was all peaceful food [that I had eaten], it was possible that this dream was straight. Therefore I was obliged to do what it said."[7] This is a single example of the telling of a dream's content conferring on the dream-teller authority to act.

Social credentials for interpretation, too, appear as badges of piety and holy ancestry; "the interpretations that a *sayyeda*[8] gives are most always right, they usually are accounted for [come to pass]. *Sayyedas* are those of our elders who are in the lineage of the Prophet [Mohammed]," Shahnāz explains. A dream-teller's claim to supernatural authority derives from the dream's validity, as assessed at least partially by when it occurs (occurrence on a Friday, *qorbān* 'sacrifice', *qabr* 'grave', or dark night renders a dream more valid) and by the absence of certain devaluators (such as the dreamer having been too anxious or having ingested "discomforting" food, medication). These domain factors are used to evaluate a dream as it is told before its results are shown. If a dream, with its interpretation, becomes true after it is told, it is assumed to have been correct, thus heightening the legitimacy of the dream-teller.

Dreams' supernatural origins alone, however, are enough reason for the Lurs to bestow authority on the dream-teller. Thus, when Mahsā told a dream that she had about Uncle

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[5] See Appendix D.
[6] Behyār, in "The Invitation of Emām Reza"
[7] Zeinaw, in "I am Abelfarz"
[8] See Appendix D.

Majnun's illness, everyone listened to her despite her low status as a Bahāri lineage member and their usual practice of ignoring her. Even the telling of a negative dream has some impact on the dream-teller's authority; Farshād comments that after telling about committing some kind of offence in a dream, the dreamer's position in real life is improved because "the experience refines our behaviour."

In the Luri mindset, dreams are powerful indeed. Mehrdād describes how non-Luri soldiers are prevented from taking over the local khan's land, winter-quarter houses, and goats because of a dream that he told, even despite his offering this wealth to them:

> *The time that they were coming, as I said, to my house that they took my goat in their hands. That time that they fell, several soldiers went down to the ground. One of them just like this had a gun, and was shooting it. Then I said, "Baba ['father'], what do you want? Or are you going to also take over his land?" I said like that. I said, "What will you do so that my house is all right?" Well now, the house after mine is that of Hosein. I was going down to Hosein's house... they had already taken over the mountain pasture. Other people were saying, "Yes, they were after his goats, didn't you know?" I did, in fact, know; I knew that they were coming. In the morning when I woke up... I went over to that side of the river, and then it happened just that same way. Sergeant Abāsi, the head of the pāsgā ['gendarmerie'], had convened with all of his men that very day at [the village of] Kodasht. And all of his men were after the village men; they wanted to get them. However even after all that they had planned, when it came about, nobody did anything—the soldiers left! Ya. You say, "How did this happen?" Well. You yourself must realize the dream's interpretation... we know that the land is already divided. So let the men take it! But the men said, "We won't take it!" It is because they know that if they do, in their fortune, dreams will tell the truth. Its interpretation is that at night I dream that, for example... those men took the land of the khan, and I say, well then, take it. But the taking [of it] did not happen, because of my dream, and later they left. This is the way it is.*
> (Mehrdād)

The Lurs have combined politically acceptable ideas with their own belief systems in order to make an important part of their culture acceptable under the watchful eye of the powers-that-be. In a society where the school functions as a means of inculcating the values of the state and of the cultural majority, informal learning in the way of dream-telling is a strong agent of socialization among the Lurs. Dream-telling characterizes an

alternative authority structure that the Lurs have developed out of their negative encounters with different forms of public education (Van der Wal, 1998, p. 3). The subtle resistance springs from the Luri heritage: a cohesive tribal social structure, a common ancestral lineage, and the bond of a unique history and territory, shared understandings, and community relationships. The Lurs can claim a distinct language and culture, and an economic livelihood that is traditionally defined by pastoral nomadism. Thus the Lurs have always related to the state as the "other" power, in relative scales of hierarchy and autonomy. It has only been in this century that universal compulsory public schooling in Iran has been instituted, and until the policies were accomplished, tribal groups such as the Lurs were at liberty to pass on their indigenous knowledge and values (Van der Wal, 1998, p. 3). Dream-telling, then, has become a way of ensuring that the passing on of indigenous culture continues despite pressures from centralization policies. The ritual's characteristic resistance is reconciled to the authority system either by dissociating it from formal systems on the one hand, or by appending religious ideas to better its image on the other.

The Lurs have adopted a form of learning that works to explain the many variables encountered in their lifestyle, as well as composing a system of authority that is agreeable within their cultural context.

awru: Social Status, Reputation, and Saving Face

The White Chador

> *Like myself last night I had a dream that a white chādor[9] was on my head. Just like that a good chādor was on my head. That very white, white, white, like that it was. Then, I awoke. Even in the dream, I said, "It is white, so my spirit is white; that is good." It's good. Then I went to sleep again. I knew that I had myself reported it. If someone else wants to say that this dream of mine has another meaning, I say, "No! That very white spirit, it is a white spirit, a happy spirit..." But something like this I told last night, what I dreamed, but from this interpretation, perhaps I wasn't wearing a white chādor. Or then, this white chādor, some people say that it is a shroud. I myself, when I awoke from sleep, interpreted it; I said, "No! It is a white spirit." Then when I fell asleep again, I dreamed that I was telling it to this woman (my paternal uncle's wife) who was*

[9] See Appendix D.

crazy, and while sleeping I reported it... so okay, it was me who was reporting it. They say I dreamed it so that I could say something good, that I myself was satanically tempted (vasvasa), but I said, "No! A white chādor is a white spirit." No, I, praise be to God, I have a white spirit. It is good. It is happy. Yeah. In this way, dreams that are too problematic, people ask questions about them [to try to get a correct interpretation]. (Azāda)

The Green Cucumber

For example, if we see that two people have different interpretations for the same dream, whoever's interpretation is correct, that person we will continue to accept [as an interpreter]. Especially to those who are old, for example, our father. Especially these elders, we learn from their interpretations, and so to these people especially we always tell our dreams. Also Ali's mother. Old women and old men. And they are very good, about dreams. Sometimes they say, "It's nothing! Go back to sleep." Or, "Go to sleep and dream about sleeping!" One time I dreamed that I was wondering whether I would be accepted for university or not. Then I went to sleep again and the dream continued... I dreamed that I saw a sign, and in the morning, a girl was at the spring. And she said, "You will be accepted." It was very good. Or, for example, perhaps we dream of a good sign or omen. For example, last night, I dreamed that I found a cucumber, a green cucumber. Now, whatever is green in dreams, it means something good. And so it [the green cucumber] meant that, "Your studies have been accepted." That's how it is. The interpretations that a sayyeda gives are most always right; they usually are accounted for [come to pass]. Sayyedas are those of our elders who are in the lineage of the Prophet [Mohammed]. A few of them are close [closer than others to the ancestry of the Prophet]. (Shahnāz)

Social Status

The dream-telling ritual confers and apportions social status.

In *Women of Deh Koh*, E. Friedl (1991) tells of how people would often talk about and ground their behaviour in how an action would appear "in the eyes of the people" (p. 103). For the Lurs, social approval is an important standard for conduct. People use dream-telling to gain social status. This was the case in "The White Chador," when Azāda told widely her bad dream, but included her own interpretation of it as good. Another way people increase their status is to tell good dreams that are about themselves, for example, that they dreamed they were accepted into university. Telling such dreams

is especially useful if they also are interpreted as good. Nargis' dream, "Sorāyā and the Blue Clothes," was good in itself, but it was even more so when she told it to Sorāyā and interpreted it to her as good. Because Nargis was also a *sayyeda* (and therefore considered to be an accurate interpreter), when Sorāyā subsequently told the dream and its interpretation, it was a very effective status raiser. She herself said it this way: "There are good dreams, and these we report to many people, as many as possible, because it looks good on us."

Reputation

The dream-telling ritual influences reputation.

People deduce aspects of the dreamers' character from their dreams that they tell. Shirin says that, although most people dream "opposite" (that is, the dream's real meaning is the opposite of how it appears), "a few people, if they are really good, upright, honest, godly, and faithful, they will dream straight." Whether a dream that is told is opposite or straight, or if it is right-speaking or a lie, or satanically inspired or mixed up and meaningless, all these factors determine the reputation of the dreamer. This is related also to character traits people value on the whole: calmness, for example, and not appearing to be *nārāhat* ('upset'), is very important in general to the Lurs, and it is also said to make one have straight dreams. Sometimes even just the fact of telling one's dream is a way of bettering one's reputation, because of the connection of the dreamers (and thus dream-tellers) with supernatural power. Although Mahnāz is Bahāri (i.e. of a lesser lineage), she can be seen more often than others telling her dreams, as a way of improving her image in the eyes of society. In telling them, she draws on the dreams' connection to positive spiritual power. E. Friedl (1991) cites other factors relevant to the dream-teller's reputation for credibility:

> Beyond the truth one witnesses directly there is no absolute truth, no indisputable fact to be had for love or money, no guarantees, only witness accounts, whatever they are worth. Their worth is calculated from one's assessment of the witness's character and ulterior motives, and how badly one wants to believe what is said. (p. 88)

Interpreters, too, enhance their reputation through the dream-telling ritual. Good interpretations are highly esteemed. The interpreter's reputation is determined primarily by the accuracy of his or her predictions, and a good record over time; people are thought of highly if they give regularly accurate predictions. Interpreters derive authority most from *sargozashta* (their 'experience'); it is the most important determining factor in whether or not an interpretation is believed. Ali Reza explains that an ideal interpreter

> *has insight in our community and always sees an interpretation. We tell our dreams to these people because they have much life experience, and much has passed before their sight. And also their [the interpreters'] ancestors were great people. You could see that their ancestors were great because when they jumped over a wall, the wall would tremble beneath them.*

Dream interpreters clearly hold a place of honour in Luri society.

Not all values are equal, however. Although good reputations are gleaned by telling 'straight' dreams and giving accurate interpretations, this point generally does not hold true in the case of warnings. If a person has a bad dream about someone else and does not warn them, or if an interpreter does not tell the dreamer that an outcome will be negative, neither of these people is necessarily responsible. This is because the value of 'reputation' is superseded by more dearly held values such as 'saving face' and 'social relationships.'

Saving Face

The dream-telling ritual demonstrates the importance of saving face.

Competing with the idea of dream-telling in Luri society, and yet a part of the ritual itself, is the value of saving face. It is competing because sometimes the value of social relationships wins out, and sometimes saving face is deemed more important in a given situation. For example, Meshkanak did not warn her relatives about her dream of a raging house fire, because she did not want to be the bearer of bad news, or to cause them any discomfort at such a terrible thought.

The importance of shame in Luri culture dictates that bad dreams must not be told if they compromise the mental comfort of either teller or listener, even if it would serve to warn them of danger. The Lurs experience this kind of discomfort when telling or hearing a

bad dream causes them to feel worried, fearful, humiliated, or envious. There is some flexibility at the other end of the ritual as well. Often if someone has a bad dream, they will do all they can to invalidate it, going through the procedures of social and religious offerings, prayers, and reversal interpretations. A person would rather prevent the results of a bad dream than admit it to others.

In the event that someone does tell a bad dream, another tactic is used to uphold the value of saving face: interpreters will inevitably try to explain it away as being invalid. At worst they say, "It's not bad, but give a *sadaqa* [offering]," and by this the dream-teller knows that the dream really was bad! There is a pertinent comparable story that Azāda tells of one woman's dream "Swallowing Sickness," in which her being half-swallowed by a beast predicted that disease would strike her. She did indeed become sick, but then she had to defend her reputation from certain interpreters who told her that she had brought on her own illness by being *vasvasa* ('satanically inspired or tempted', i.e. in league with the devil) when she dreamed it. Her sickness became a potent reminder of the social shame of having told her dream.

E. Friedl (1991) elaborates on this theme by citing a reprimand, common in Luri culture: "A guest is a guest. You don't abuse a guest, no matter how little you think of him. After a guest has left, you can say what you want, but not in his face" (p. 63).

xomuni: Community Identity and Social Relationships

Sorāyā and the Blue Clothes

> *There are also good dreams, and these we report to many people, as many as possible, because it looks good on us. The dreams of a sayyed or sayyeda are more likely to come to pass, and should be heeded.*
>
> *Nargis is the daughter of a sayyeda, and she dreamed that I [Sorāyā] was wearing completely blue clothes. This meant that I had a clean spirit. She told me about it, interpreted it, and said "may God help you," and I said, "Thank-you." This brought me much happiness.* (Sorāyā)

Making Peace

> *We tell our dreams in order to assure peace. Because if we tell our dreams to someone, possibly they have an interpretation. Sometimes we wait to tell [our*

dreams about another person] to see if they will come true first, to see whether the next morning we see the results, or not. For example, if I dream that someone falls ill, or that someone loses their animal, or that someone goes on a pilgrimage, the next morning I speak to their mother or father or sister, or whomever, and say, "last night I dreamed that your child did such-and-such," so that they will know what to do. And if the meaning is good, they are happy. But if the meaning is some danger that is supposed to happen, then they must give a sadaqa ('offering'). And some of these dreams we are afraid to tell; sometimes we don't tell our dreams, for example, if the person might become upset, then we don't tell. If it is something happy, then we tell it. (Golnāz)

Community Identity

The dream-telling ritual determines identity in the Luri community.

For the Lurs, dream-telling is a part of life. It is not that only Lurs tell their dreams, but that for them, their particular system of dream-telling reveals a key component of their tribal identity. This is observable both in their dreams' typical subjects and in the way in which dreams are told.

Tellings of dreams commonly centre on the practices that make a person a part of the community, and which are closely tied to identity in the tribe. Traditional rites of passage, such as births, weddings, and deaths are indicated in dreams but are often interpreted as opposite: when Azāda dreams that her son Arash is "laid out" on his deathbed, for example, it means rather that he will have a long life. And a wedding seen in a dream is usually recounted with a sense of foreboding.

Discussion of a dream's meaning, however, takes place in a setting conducive to solidifying "who's who" in a social context. Shahnāz points out, too, that "*We never dream about people that we don't know. For example, relatives, friends, and neighbours, it is of these people that we dream. But people who don't know us, they themselves never come into our dreams.*" Outsiders do not join in the Luri ritual of dream-telling.

Identity is a part of dream-telling for the additional reason that the ritual defines roles within the Luri community, both those of listeners and interpreters. The "approved" audience for telling a dream is governed by an individual's identity in the tribal context.

One wouldn't tell dreams to strangers, for example.[10] But one would tell dreams to *xomuni* 'those of ourselves' i.e. people who are a part of the community... Shahnāz mentions that people tell warning-dreams only to "someone either from our clan or from another [closely related] clan... so that no evil befalls them." Dream-telling here functions to protect the in-group from possible harm, but the reverse side of this is that it excludes those who are not clan members.

There is a wide gulf between Lurs and the urban population. R. Arasteh comments that many an urban teacher has been chased away from the village schools because of outright cultural clashes (Arasteh, 1962, p. 86). In the dream-telling ritual, too, this contrast is clear: Lurs say, "there are interpreters in the city but we usually just go to someone we know, from our clan." There is a distinct stigma on all types of outsiders, and they are categorised as *Torki* (another tribe, the Qashqā'i), *Fārsi* (the Persian majority), and *shahri* (city people). This also is a dichotomy, because where the larger society (Persians) has greater prestige than the Lurs, there is a strong sense of unity and camaraderie retained by the Lurs in terms of belonging to the in-group. As they say, "the Lurs always stick together."

The Lurs are quite aware that they are looked down upon by the Persians, and even to the extent that it functions to keep them out of the big cities (though not the small, more Lur-dominated cities such as Khorrāmābād and Nurābād-e Mamasani). E. Friedl describes this phenomenon in another Luri village: when a family was reluctant to make formal complaints about being mistreated by an ill-informed city doctor, "formal protests would involve only outsiders... theirs was an honourable, quiet family, and what would be gained by such a show of indignity?" (Friedl, 1991, p. 20

Dream-telling in the Luri context is like an insiders' code— each community has its own best interpreters and its certain networks of people with whom individuals may share their dreams. These are known especially as the *rish-sapid* ('grey-beards') or *bozorgān* ('great ones') or *piral* ('elders'). Such people are key participants in the process of cultural knowledge-keeping. The fact that the Lurs have as a criterion for a good

[10] I had access to this knowledge because I was so much an outsider that I was perceived as being of no harm to them; if I were Persian I doubt that I would have had that kind of access.

interpreter that he or she be of close kin or a friend implicates the value of the in-group in the dream-telling ritual.

Social Relationships

The dream-telling ritual establishes and strengthens relationships.

One of the most prominent functions of the dream-telling ritual is to create and cement bonds between people in the community. This is done in a number of ways. Dream-telling can be used to indicate friendship by encouraging a person, showing them trust, warning them of danger, praying a blessing on them, or settling a potential dispute. Additionally, many roles in the ritual provide for the flourishing of social alliances.

encouragement or warning

In Luri society, people are able to show support for one another by telling their dreams. This may be in the form of either encouragement or warning. Related in "Sorāyā and the Blue Clothes" quoted above, Nargis had a good dream about Sorāyā, who appeared in a lucky blue garment. When she told Sorāyā her dream, it was to encourage her, and Sorāyā responded, "[she said] it meant that I had a clean spirit... I said, "thank-you." This brought me much happiness."[11]

Weighed against the value of saving face, sometimes relationships are sealed because of a timely warning in a dream that is told. Noshin once had a dream about her brother's impending ill luck in his marriage proposal if he went through with it that day.[12] As a result of her telling him the dream, he put it off until a later time. Another time in a dream, Sorāyā saw Nāzyāb's six-year-old son. He was just sitting on the step and a voice said, "a certain person's son died." Sorāyā reported it, but a week later, the boy died.[13] Although it is difficult to give bad news, especially considering the Luri value of saving face, in this case the dreamer was willing to divulge her dream because she cared more about Nāzyāb. It is apparent that dream-telling here is a way of conveying concern for others.

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[11] Sorāyā, in "Sorāyā and the Blue Clothes"
[12] Noshin, in "My Brother's Proposal"
[13] Sorāyā, in "Nāzyāb's Son Died"

The audience's interpretation or discussion of a dream's meaning also has an impact on those individuals' relationships with the dream-teller. For example, if a listener suggests that a dream's meaning is bad, and it turns out (either according to a more authoritative interpretation or in reality) to be good, then that listener's relationship with the dream-teller is soured. Azāda was quite indignant when her friends interpreted her dream "The White Chādor" to mean that she was covered by a funerary shroud. A dream-teller's audience is generally expected to be more sympathetic, because they realize the value of the relationships that are involved.

intimacy and fellowship

In terms of sharing intimacies among friends, dreams have higher value even than gossip because of their potential future predictions; dream-telling is regarded as a favour or relationship building act because it potentially requires vulnerability. It is thus because it entails submitting oneself to another person's interpretation. Ali Reza usually tells his dreams just to his grandmother, and she, knowing the value of such intimacy, says, "don't tell your dream to anyone." Noshin likewise admits, "We don't tell everyone in front of us," but more often, it is the spouse, the grandparents, the siblings, or the close friends who are named as best audiences for telling a dream. The dream-telling ritual is not a forum open to the unlimited public.[14] On the contrary, dream-tellers have special relationships, and to tell a dream is to expose one's deepest soul. In the words of Noshin, "Sometimes we don't tell them... except in our own household, with our own thoughts, this is how we tell them. Some of them also we don't tell... Dreams that are full of feelings, those we don't often tell."

Social relationships do indeed determine the audience for dream-telling. Parastu told Moshknāz her dream "The Broken Tooth" in order to show that she trusted and respected her interpretations. Likewise, Majnun did not tell his neighbour his dream about their son getting sick, for fear of aggravating his relationship with the family due to such bad news. In "My Mother's Gift," Shahnāz recognizes that the appearance of her deceased mother,

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[14] The reader will note that telling a dream for an interpretation is different than telling a dream along with its already-given-and-accepted interpretation; the latter rather functions as a boast, warning, or teaching.

looking well in her dream, means that she will receive a gift from someone close to her in the community.[15] Bonding among people, then, is improved because of such dreams and their interpretations.

Family ties are of particular importance, and many Lurs tell their dreams only to immediate family members. Ardeshir once had a dream predicting the arrival of his brother from the city of Bushehr, and when it happened the next day just as he dreamed it, people asked him, "How did you know?" His reply was, "A person knows when his brother comes to visit!"[16] It happens frequently in the Luri community that a person knows from his dreams that a family relation is returning from a trip or coming to visit. Dreams of this kind take the place of a letter announcing a family member's return in a literate society. One woman encapsulates the ideal of family togetherness well:

> *I had a good dream last night. I dreamed that all my children came home, and all together we were sitting around the sorfa ('tablecloth'), and we were all happy. So I am hopeful that all my children will come home, and that it will be just this way. It's possible that just this way will happen, but it's also possible that [it will not happen] because I was so much wishing that those children would come, that night I was thoughtful and so I had that dream.*

This demonstrates the importance of being together and the strength of family bonds.

Whether among family or friends, dream-telling plays an important role in upholding the social value of togetherness or fellowship for the Lurs. Mohamad, for example, told about his dream that he was in prison. His aunt Azāda interpreted it to mean that he felt lonely; since he was alone in his "prisonlike" room for two weeks while his family was in the city. For that reason she sent her son Arash to sleep over at his house and to keep him company.[17] In this instance, dream-telling fulfilled a social necessity. Connecting the image of imprisonment with loneliness is a leap, but Azāda needed nothing other than her Luri culture stressing the value of fellowship.

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[15] Shahnāz, in "My Mother's Gift"
[16] Ardeshir, in "A Visit from Bushehr"
[17] Azāda, in "Mohamad Imprisoned"

Essentially, the dream-telling ritual provides an apt forum for fellowship particularly when people use the need to tell a dream as an excuse for a *sarkeshi* (get-together). It affords a culturally acceptable reason for socializing.

social offerings

A significant part of the dream-telling ritual is the social offering or *narz*. In this, someone who has a bad dream will take fruit or sweets around to friends and neighbours, asking for their blessing to counteract the bad dream's curse. The *narz* is believed to protect the dreamer from the bad dream taking effect, but the 'prayers of the people' are a necessary component. Being from a lesser lineage, Mahsā is not as well connected in the community as most women are; however, she can quite frequently be found appealing for remedy from a bad dream by giving *narz* ('social offerings'). The ritual provides a course of action for her to gain acceptance in the community. She could as easily appeal her fate using other means, but the social offerings serve to improve her relationships in the community by her requests for prayers from everyone, and are a culturally legitimate way of asking for a blessing.

peacekeeping

The dream-telling ritual accommodates peacekeeping simply by allowing individuals to lighten the burden of each other's hardships. Shahnāz expresses this reasoning: "We tell our dreams in order to find peace... For example, when we tell our dreams to each other, then it helps us because our thoughts become empty, in our heads our memories are cleared. And we find a little bit of peace this way."

Another aspect of peacekeeping is the enforcement of *rāhati* through the dream-telling ritual. The principle of *rāhati* is a very strong one in Luri culture; it means staying outwardly calm no matter the circumstances, and giving the appearance that all is well among people. *Rāhati* applies especially to relationships, in which even the slightest show of displeasure can bring offence. Sometimes this value even overrules the value of social status, such as when a friend told Noshin her dream:

> *...that there was a wedding at the house of her uncle. For example, she told this dream to me the next morning. She said "I dreamed that there was a wedding at the house of my own uncle." Two or three days later, her maternal uncle's wife*

(zanālush) died. That wedding became mourning (shivān). She had told this dream, she told it to me, and I said, "it's good! Thanks be to God." I said that it was good. But really, after several days, its result was this [sorrow]. If we dream about a wedding, we say that it means that someone will die.[18] *(Noshin)*

Noshin avoided telling the woman that a tragedy would befall her, in order to protect the peace of their relationship; this was even more important than the status that would have been conferred on her for giving a correct interpretation.

Farshād notes that "we tell its goodness... we tell the dream's agreeable parts, because when we say that it is good, [the listener] is also happy. But, well, there are some bad dreams, which, for example, they may cause upset, so that we... don't report the dream to them in such a case." The Lurs seek to preserve *rāhati* or peace in friendships by keeping their dream-telling audience from becoming displeased in any way.

When it does happen that there is conflict among people, the ritual of dream-telling can also be instrumental in mending relationships. To do this, one must create a network of people with whom dreams may be shared, necessitating the fostering of good relations with one's neighbours. "It has religious merits to make peace among people," agree E. Friedl's informants (1991, p. 95). The Lurs say good relations are like the metaphor of what they call "calm" food which does not "war together" in one's stomach. Thus when two parties had a falling out, and one returned from a trip, it was asked, "Who visited whom first?"; that is to say, "Who made peace with whom?" One must be on good terms with someone in order to tell them a dream; in fact, dream-telling is often used to change the dynamics of social relationships. This was the case in "Sorāyā and the Blue Clothes," as mentioned, and also in many situations where dreamers particularly choose the people to whom they will tell their dreams.

A similar pattern that is often seen in Luri dreams is warnings to avoid fighting. Noshin advises,

> *if a fierce animal comes for you [in a dream], it is a proverb of a beast. Whether it be, for example, a bear, or a wolf, or a boar— if any of these come to you it is a bad thing for you, its evil will come after you. So if you don't need to mention the dream and don't say anything to anyone, don't speak of it, so that this night the*

[18] Noshin, in "Wedding Mourning at Uncle's House"

beast will not come for you. And if you are careful not to fight with anyone, and you don't yell at anyone, it will come to good after all. If you don't look for a fight, then the dream will be happiness and peace for you instead.[19]

Social disruption of community peace is very negatively portrayed in dreams as a fierce beast.

In Farshād's dream "In My Own House," the meaning of a fight turns out to be its opposite: someone striking him with a stick becomes an emblem of reconciliation or *solh*. Conflict in a dream becomes an opportunity for peacekeeping in real life, just as Farshād found it to be an indication that he would actually form a bond of friendship with his dream-aggressor.

Luri Learning

The entire dream-telling ritual reveals Luri ways of thinking and learning. The content of the dreams they tell, and the distinct ways in which they tell their dreams, how they interpret them, and how they act upon them to influence outcomes... these are replete with meanings that are central to their culture. Essentially, the development of cultural themes in the dream-telling ritual draws the lines on their cognitive map. In this process, the Lurs learn what the world is like and how they must act within it. They learn to think in ways that are bounded and guided by the themes of their culture.

The theme of control and authority is a reflection of the Lurs' nomadic heritage and the unique place they hold in the wider society of Iran. Their elaborate system of earning status, preserving reputation, and avoiding shame indicates that these are important aspects of what it means to be a Lur. The complexity of negotiating relationships in the community gives further credence to the idea that the Luri social network cannot be dismissed from a consideration of informal learning institutions.

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[19] Noshin, in "Proverb of a Beast"

CHAPTER FIVE: A RE-TELLING

Reconciling Representation with Reality

Chapter Four's analysis of the data clarifies that the telling of dreams, the meanings bestowed on them, and the belief in those meanings have tremendous, unequivocal sociocultural significance for the Lurs. The question of whether dreams themselves bear the influences of culture or whether the teller, in re-creating the dream for listeners, makes it conform to the bounds of culture, is irrelevant to this study. This study assumes that culture influences dreams *as they are told in a social context*, and this activity becomes an occasion for the construction and re-construction of shared cognitive categories, presented in Chapter Four as the cultural themes. When they are told, dreams can be made to conform to social values, to illustrate a point, and to warn against future disaster or spread good news, among other things. They can also be used to confirm such cultural knowledge as already exists. Unknown or vague details can be filled in to conform to values; socially, dream-telling confirms values and lends authority to them. When people say that they have dreamed alike, it is often an indication of their having a similar cultural cognitive map. In fact, very often among the Lurs people tell about dreams of common subjects pertaining to the cultural themes expounded in Chapter Four. Even among vastly different dreams, within a society a pattern of cultural knowledge may be discovered upon analysis of the ways in which dreams are related. Dream-telling is certainly outside the realm of formal learning; in fact, it sometimes functions to defy those very bounds that are strictly laid down by larger authorities. Because of the rigidity and far-reaching influence of the dominant Iranian culture, especially in areas of education and religion, tribal social institutions such as dream-telling provide an alternative expression for cultural knowledge which is uniquely Luri.

Functions of the Dream-telling Ritual

The structure of the dream-telling ritual, as described above, is precisely a method for accomplishing certain social purposes. The cultural themes, outlined in the previous chapter, are key to understanding this but reflecting on those themes it is possible to identify what functions dream-telling performs for the Lurs. As T. O. Beidelman (1997) points out in his ethnography of Kaguru ritual, "socially assigned meanings contain a

wide spectrum of significance and aims, not merely ones that people assert" (p. 26). It should therefore be noted that the following are neither explicit nor necessarily intended functions, but they represent the role of dream-telling in Luri society.

Firstly and most importantly for this study, dream-telling serves the social function of facilitating the learning of shared cultural knowledge. It does this by socially confirming cultural knowledge found in dreams, by lending authority to cultural values, and by creating a forum in which the roles of teacher and learner, teller and listener, are continually validated. This is not a minor issue, especially in a context in which minority peoples are not held in high esteem by the Persian majority.

The analysis of dream-telling also reveals the cognitive patterns and categories of knowledge that are shared by Luri society. These are brought out in the cultural themes of how the Lurs perceive their world and order it specifically in a way that makes sense of otherwise ambiguous input.

Culture influences dreams as they are told in a social context, and this activity becomes an occasion for the construction and re-construction of shared cognitive categories. Indigenous culture does not evolve in a vacuum, but through a dynamic and dialogic process. The body of cultural knowledge is indigenous and traditional, however, in the sense that it imposes existing categories and indigenous patterns on any new information that is introduced into the culture.

The institution of dream-telling sometimes functions to defy the rigid authority of the national culture, especially in areas of education and religion, by providing an alternative expression for cultural knowledge boundaries that are unique to the Lurs. Dream-telling is a less threatening medium (than storytelling or more direct speech, for example) for expressing ideas that register dissent, because dreams are not consciously created. They are not subject to regulation by the normative values of the national culture, as other media are, and therefore the teller endures a lesser risk of being persecuted for the dream's message.

The intended and explicit functions of dream-telling are variously to inform, to give a message or prediction, or to get advice or an interpretation. However, many more functions that are not explicit can be discerned in this ritual. Besides those functions

already mentioned, dream-telling acts to explain the unknown and control outcomes, to bestow authority on its participants, to confer and apportion social status, and to influence reputation and the social recognition of shame. It is one determiner of identity in the Luri community, and it works to establish and strengthen relationships within it. Passing on cultural knowledge is the sum of the dream-telling ritual's functions.

The Social Mediation of Indigenous Knowledge

Various forms of social discussion, including chat, gossip, and dream-telling, are types of informal court: they accommodate communal decision making. Upon hearing any small case that comes to their knowledge, people can decide what is valid, what is right, and what is to be done. As people in the community talk more about an idea, they often come to hold a common view of it. And although the people who are explicitly most influential in deciding upon a community viewpoint are generally the loudest voices, there are many softer voices that are indeed heard and come to influence—unacknowledged—community thought. The ritual of dream-telling is a principal example of this. Dreams as they are told form a part of the Luri indigenous knowledge system. Although in some cases it is limited (as in those dreams which are only told to close relatives and friends), cultural knowledge is used both to tell dreams and to interpret them, as well as to perceive the effects of the dreams. E. Friedl (1991) explains that

> ...the much more interesting and important matters, those with elaborate shadings between truth and untruth, have to be argued, discussed, consented upon. They don't present themselves ready made. Indeed, if it were not for the endless possibilities of arguing about the shapes of things that are, or were, or might have been happening, knowledge would be reduced to statements of the obvious— a tree is a tree, a bird flies, grass is green— and the world would be very reliable and just as boring, without spunk, flat as a breadboard and just as colorless.(p.89)

Although cultural knowledge guides the dream-telling ritual, there is no doubt in the minds of the people as to the divine origin of dreams. Therefore, even the quieter voices may be heard when they speak with this divine authority about what they have dreamed. The divine origin of dreams is also the reason why no guilt is on a person if they do not tell a warning-dream to the person who might be in danger: although God sends dreams, people cannot always be sure of their meaning. So even if a dream contains important

subjects or other people, or has a serious interpretation, ultimately the dream's result is not upon the conscience of the dreamer, even if it is terrible. Fate is God's domain. What will happen, will happen. And even if God might be swayed by, perhaps, money in the box or a prayer from friends, his will is still absolutely his own. There is the greater power of God, and there is the lesser power, the power the Lurs have found in dream-telling. Negotiated cultural knowledge provides the rules for the expression of dream experience, while dreams' characteristic divinity justifies the validity of dream-telling for the Lurs.

Every society, in the attempt to explain the unknown and to direct behaviour, designs a cognitive map. C. Geertz (1973) calls these *explanatory models*: systems of thought built to both describe the nature of reality, and provide a plan to guide the actions of people in a society. The Lurs have built an explanatory model in dream-telling. Telling a dream does not only give the listener information about the actual dream; symbolically embedded in the ritual itself is much implicit information about what is important in Luri culture, the themes constituting knowledge vital to Luri identity.

The dream-telling ritual reflects the way in which they perceive the world around them. The specific ways in which they tell dreams; the effects of telling them; prescriptions for action in view of a dream; the specified content of dreams as they are told and the meanings people typically take from them; and roles and rules surrounding the ritual itself, every part of the experience reveals themes and values which are the basic elements of their cultural cognitive map. Taken as a whole, the dream-telling ritual offers a precise reflection of what it means to be Luri.

Dream-telling is not merely a symbolic map of Luri cultural knowledge. In order for the symbolic map to be a viable perspective of the real world, it must come full circle; Luri culture is not validated until cultural representations in the dream are reconciled to reality. The themes that are tacitly learned in Luri culture are reinforced as actors *experience* the dream-telling ritual. When a people's cognitive map— what has been taught— corresponds to the reality that they experience, the map is confirmed; this is how their worldview is learned (Hutchins, 1995, p. 13). The Lurs' system of dream-telling works for the very reason that it adequately explains their experience of the world;

their subsequent manipulation of the world through the ritual continually verifies their worldview.

People apply dream-telling as a social-cognitive strategy in dealing with problems they encounter. They use it to exert power in the society. They exploit it to influence how they are regarded by others. And they employ it to define the nature of participation in their community. The emergent cultural themes are implicated not only in the learning institution of dream-telling, but in every area of life that is a part of Luri culture.

Learning about Learning

Cultural themes of the Luri cognitive map—control and authority, social status, reputation, and saving face, and social relationships and community identity—are learned through the dream-telling ritual. It is clear from this study that learning cannot be separated from its socio-cultural context. People often learn best not through formal education, but rather by indigenous means (Ranaweera, 1989). For this reason, the ideal starting point for a relevant, workable development program is the close study of a group's cultural character. J. L. Dolgin, D. S. Kemnitzer, and D. M. Schneider (1977) assert that studying culture involves abstracting meaning from the concrete, symbolic actions of people for the purpose of understanding their system of meanings. This study accomplishes that exactly: it abstracts meanings, in the form of cultural themes, from the Luri dream-telling ritual in order to understand their system of meanings; that is, their cultural cognitive map. Symbolic anthropology brings to light those facets of a culture that are most important to the society itself. L. M. Edelsward (1993) puts it fittingly: "culture is illuminated through examination of the [cultural symbol] because important symbols... express essential cultural notions" (p. 38). This study has sought to find out 'essential cultural notions' of the Luri people, and to map one aspect of their shared cognitive system. The actors and activities that are inherent in dream-telling as a learning institution are an essential part of the process of transmitting this most fundamental cultural knowledge.

The original assumption of this study was that the cultural themes of the Luri cognitive map could be discovered in the examination of a certain symbol. Dream-telling as a learning institution was found to be such an important focus in Luri life that the

interconnectedness of the themes in their culture moved into the foreground of realisation. These cultural themes are the lines which intersect in an elaborate pattern representing the ways in which the Lurs pass on indigenous knowledge. The analysis presented above has attempted to classify the elements of dream-telling within an ethnographic framework, giving a coherent picture of learning in Luri culture.

This thesis contributes to the development of three intersecting fields of study, each informing the other: indigenous education, symbolic anthropology, and cognitive science. To the discipline of indigenous education, this study offers an exploration of informal learning in Luri society, as well as themes of cultural knowledge which might form the basis of a more appropriate curriculum. "Symbolic anthropology is dedicated to studying and researching the process by which people give *meaning* to their world and their actions in it" (Applebaum, 1987, p. 482); this field allows for the contribution of an example: this study's use of the key symbol of dream-telling in the presentation of an emic understanding of Luri culture. Cognitive science receives from this study the addition of the cultural perspective, without which it would be flawed. It also benefits from a description of one people's knowledge system, and from an examination of the Luri cognitive map, being created in their minds as they assign meaning to external structures.

Furthermore, this study has contributed to academia's scant awareness of a people, by presenting an intimate perspective of their cultural knowledge. Anthropological work on the Lurs is significant because they have been largely neglected for the most part by the academic world, especially so outside of Iran. It is research for and with the Lurs themselves, as an ethnological record and case study in their indigenous history.

Implications

For Sensitive Development

The need to consider indigenous values in development is obvious in light of the failure of nationalist systems to reach minority peoples. This is the case even where formal education has been instituted: national schools in tribal areas are often insensitive to local needs. Development that is seen as coming from outsiders without having listened

to local voices simply does not work; the Lurs have demonstrated that they have their own ways of learning their own cultural knowledge.

Indigenous knowledge systems *can* be used in education. This study has provided a general outline of the Luri cognitive map, but it needs to be complemented with specifics of how education should be practised among the Lurs in consideration of indigenous values.

For Further Research

Additionally, and because no study of a culture can be exhaustive, there is much left to learn about the Lurs, including knowledge that the Lurs themselves may wish to develop. This study recommends that linguistic analysis be done on dream-telling discourse, perhaps comparing it to that of storytelling, riddles, poetry, and other genres in the oral tradition. There is room for further inquiry into any of the domains that this study investigates but does not choose to focus on, such as the roles of dream-tellers and interpreters, which would reveal precise definitions of Luri social networks and relationships. Looking at ways of preventing the results of a bad dream, as another example, could lead into a more in-depth study of the extensive Luri system of offerings.

Turner (1977) suggests that "symbols may be used over wide geographical areas with much of the same meaning... therefore, symbolic studies from neighboring groups could provide valuable data" (pp. 192-194). With this in mind, further examination of dream-telling in related societies, such as the Luri groups in Iraq, would be instructive. Pursuing a comparative study could be particularly interesting, in order to determine whether some of the same, or similar, themes are present.

On Foreign Correspondence

I came away from Iran feeling that my fieldwork time had been rich; it was an experience rich in data and contrasts, full of mysteries to ponder for the months and years to come. Analysis of the Lurs' cultural knowledge and learning was an exercise in flexible vision. Anthropology, and particularly that which is done through ethnographic study, is meant to entail just that kind of perspective: it spans from examination of minute details implicit in the mind of a single culture, to universal principles in human cognitive systems. It is an incredible process to work through this contrast: examining a culture

deeply and specifically, but then undertaking to write about it in such a manner that a situation so foreign and far away from its readers is ultimately understood.

I have made reference to the fact that much of my learning about the Lurs was incidental; I learned much about the themes of Luri culture through the experiences of just getting to know the people. I learned of the many ways in which the Lurs are isolated. Getting to do this research was very much a challenge, a struggle with bureaucracy every step of the way. My field supervisor at Shiraz University commented that I was only the second foreigner to be permitted to do fieldwork in Iran in the past twenty-odd years! Knowing this made the data all the more a treasure, and the write-up process that much more valuable. Along the way I was in touch with two foreign anthropologists, whom had both worked in Iran before the revolution. They congratulated me on my good luck in having finally obtained a long term research visa, for it was something they had not been able to do all these years. In sleep, I see… and so I went under a green tree beside the spring and prayed, in order that it would surely come to pass just as I had dreamed it…

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Appendix A: Ethnographic Questions for Focused Observation

1. **what knowledge is transmitted?**
   - what are the cultural themes?
   - what are different kinds of learning (ways, subjects)?
   - importance of different kinds of knowledge -- how is importance signified (what shows that a dream's message is more important than others)? how is knowledge ordered? what criteria are used for dividing or distinguishing knowledge (what are the attributes of each category?)
   - what knowledge is essential/ supplementary (auxiliary)? are there different essentials for different groups of learners? which dreams with certain themes are told to whom?
   - what knowledge is accessible to all, only to a select group? (this depends on the audience of the dream-telling)
   - what knowledge is considered difficult to obtain, easy to obtain?
   - what knowledge is high prestige, low prestige?
   - difference between kinds of knowledge? are any two or more alike? what are dimensions of contrast?
2. **what institutions transmit knowledge?**
   - contexts/ "places" of learning; other uses of learning contexts (and how these uses are
   - related), contexts for dream-telling & other uses of these
   - defining qualities of each institution (& what makes it ideal, less ideal)
   - special times/ days/ conditions for learning
   - source of an institution's authority
   - rules governing learning within an institution (who/ how/ what/ when?).
   - difference between various learning institutions? are any two or more alike? what are dimensions of contrast?
3. **what actors transmit knowledge?**
   - who are the dream-tellers?
   - identities of tellers – group status ascribed/achieved, source of a teller's
   - authority; times when this identity is in effect (when the role is assumed)
   - types of tellers – qualities of a good teller, of a bad teller
   - roles of tellers – duties/ responsibilities/ obligations, privileges
   - who are the dream-listeners (audience)?
   - identities of listeners –group status ascribed/achieved, source of a listener's authority;
   - times when this identity is in effect (when the role is assumed)
   - types of listeners – qualities of a good listener, of a bad listener
   - roles of listeners – duties/ responsibilities/ obligations, privileges
   - who are the interpreters?
   - identities of interpreters –group status ascribed/achieved, source of a interpreter's authority;
   - times when this identity is in effect (when the role is assumed)
   - types of interpreters – qualities of a good interpreter, of a bad interpreter

- roles of interpreters – duties/ responsibilities/ obligations, privileges
- others (e.g. encouragers, discouragers)
- identities of encouragers, discouragers – group status ascribed/achieved; times when
- this identity is in effect (when the role is assumed)
- types of encouragers, discouragers – qualities of a successful encourager,
- discourager; of an unsuccessful encourager, discourager; source of an encourager's, a discourager's authority
- roles of encouragers, discouragers – duties/ responsibilities, privileges
- difference between teller, listener, interpreter, and others? are any two more alike? what are dimensions of contrast?

4. **what are the activities of knowledge transmission?**
   - ways of learning (methods) – who endorses dream-telling? who uses it? who does not
   - participate in dream-telling?
   - what subjects (cultural themes) are taught using dream-telling? which subjects are not
   - taught using the method of dream-telling?
   - parts/ stages/ steps in learning through dream-telling?
   - parts/ stages/ steps in teaching through dream-telling?
   - testing / practise points, and end points to learning a cultural theme?
   - criteria for considering knowledge to be well-learned (understood vs. imitated, practised,
   - experienced, explained, read); examples where someone contradicts a cultural
   - theme— how are they socially (constrained)?
   - positive and negative sanctions
   - how is knowledge confirmed in and by the society? what are other confirmations of the
   - cultural themes?
   - difference between various types of dream-telling? are any two more alike? what are dimensions of contrast?

Appendix B: Formal Ethnographic Interview Questions

the nature of dreams

- do dreams mean anything? always, sometimes, or rarely? **xawyal ke didi ma'ni dāran? hamisha, ma'mulan, ba'zi vaqtal dāran, ā taqriban aslan nadāran?**
- do you ever learn things from dreams, or do they contain messages (sent from whom)? **va xaw ke didi chizal yād igeri? xāwyal payāmal dāran? payāmal va kina?**
- who sends dreams? who influences dreams? **xaw ke didi, ki vat ide? ki nofuzesh ikone?**
- how do you know when what you've dreamed is true or false? **chetaw iduni ke xaw ke didi doros ā dorugh-a? ay rāsgu-a yā na?**
- how do you know when to follow it (listen to it), or believe it? **chetaw iduni ke bāyad vash gush bedi yā na? chetaw iduni ke bāyad dinesh beri, yā na?**
- what are some different kinds of dreams? **chejur-a xawi-ya moxtalef has?**
- what happens when a person dreams? **vaqti kesi xaw-na ibine, che vābu? chikone?**
- what characters are usually seen in dreams? **ma'mulan, men-a xaw, ki-na didi?**
- what do people learn from dreams? **va xaw ke didi, che yād igiri?**

the social context of dreams: telling & interpreting

- to whom do you tell your dreams? **va ki xaw-na igi?**
- who interprets dreams? **ki tajrobesh dāre?**
- are the interpretations always believed, or are there multiple interpretations? **hamisha tajrobesh-a bāvar ikoni? ba'zi vaqtal chantā tajrobesh dāre?**
- what makes a dream tellable? do you tell people about all dreams? which ones? **si che xaw-na igi? hama-ya xaw igi? kodum yekesh igi?**
- which dreams are most important to tell to a group of people? **kodum xawyal va hama mohemtaran, ke bāyad va digaral begi?**
- if you dream about someone, are you obligated to tell them about it? **ay ishā men-a xaw kesiy-a dige-na ibini, bāyad vash begit, ā na?**
- do people ever dream the same thing? who? under what circumstances? **ba'zi vaqtal do nafar ye dun xaw ibinan? ki? kay vo si che?**

examples & experiences

- tell about a recent dream you have had. in what context would you tell this dream? to whom? **xāhesh ikonom ye xawiy ke didi begi. ma'mulan kay i xaw-na igi? va ki igidesh?**
- tell about a typical instance in which you would relate a dream. **xāhesh ikonom ye hāli begi ke ma'mulan menesh xawi igi.**
- tell about a dream (yours or another person's) which had an important meaning or was very significant. **xāhesh ikonom ye xaw begi (māl-a ishā yā kesiy-a dige) ke ma'ni-ya mahli mohem dāsht.**
- tell about a time you learned something from someone else's dream. **xāhesh ikonom begi ye bār ke va xaw-a kesiy-a dige chizi yād geroti?**

Appendix C: Informant Consent Form

Concerning the research of Christina Van der Wal Anonby, a student of the University of Alberta, Canada:
dar bāre-ye tahqiq-e xānom-e ānownbi ke dāneshju-ye dāneshgāh-e albertā hast ke dar kānādāst:

I understand that the purpose of this research is to discover the indigenous conceptual categories of knowledge of the Lors of Iran. I also understand that the nature of the research is to investigate, through ethnographic study, their ways of learning and to observe how knowledge is transmitted through people, places, and activities in the tribe.
Christina Van der Wal Anonby intends to live with the tribe and do research over a period of approximately ten months, with monthly trips to Shiraz.
midunid ke hadaf-e tahqiqesh barā-ye peidā kardan-e taqsim-e bumi-e 'elm-e lorhā dar irān ast. ham midunid ke xāst-e tahqiq, dars-e ensānshenāsi be rajebeh towr-e āmuzesheshān ast, va tamāshā kerdan-e in ast, ke chetor 'elm rā be ham yād midahand be vasileh-e mardom, makānhā, va amalhā dar il. xānom-e anunbi bā il mixāhad tahqiq va zendegi kardan,barāye modati-ye taqriban dah mā, har mā be shiraz bar gashteh.
I understand the purpose and nature of this research as outlined above, that I have been invited to particpate as an informant, and that I have the right to opt out of this study at any time, without prejudice to pre-existing entitlements. The researcher may observe, record, and analyse my activities and words during the course of her ethnographic research, and I am responsible to provide information that is as accurate. There will be two ethnographic interviews, each with a duration of approximately thirty minutes.
hamānṭur ke gofteh ast injā, hadaf va hālat-e hamin tahqiq rā midunid. ham midunid ke xānom ānownbi shomā da'vat kārde barā-ye mosāhebeh, va har vaqt ke mixāhid, mitunid qabul nakonid va e'tebār-e sohbathā-ye gozashte hamchenān bāqi ast. ejāze midahid be ta'rif kardan-e motahaqiq barā-ye tamāshā-ye sohbat va raftār-e-shomā va hamchenin neveshtan (yā zabt kardan), va dars xāndan. ham midunid ke mas'ul hastid, pas faqat etelā'āt-e dorost va haqiqat rā beguyid. (shāyad do mosāhebeh mibāshas),har mosāhebeh taqriban si daqiqe bāshad.
I understand that Christina Van der Wal Anonby will do her utmost to ensure that my privacy and dignity are respected in her research, and that neither threat nor harm comes upon me as a result of this study. I understand that I may withhold my name or any other personal detail from this study should I so choose. I know that although I may choose to *not* participate in the study at any time, I may, in doing so, lose the benefits or harms of having contributed to the body of human knowledge. I understand that the researcher reserves the right to exclude any data that are irrelevant or inappropriate to her study.
midunid ke xānom-e ānownbi nahāyat-e kushesh rā mikonad ke motma'en bāshad dar tahqiqesh be xosusiyāt va shaxsiat-e shomā ehterām begozārad, va dar pāyān-e in tahqiq āsib va zahmat be kesi naresad. agar mixāhid, ejāze dārid barā-ye nāmetān yā ettelā'at-e shaxsi rā nadahid. ham midunid ke harchand mitunid dar in mosāhebeh sherkat nakonid, vali intowr momkin ast fā'ede rā az dast bedehid, va be kolli dar olum-e jahāni, dāneshetān shenāxte nashavad. midunid ke dar tahqiqesh, agar ettelā'ati-ye monāseb nabāshad, motahaqiq mitunad az in estefādeh nakonad.

I understand that the data will be used for her Master's thesis, and that they may be published or presented at a conference, and that both the academic community and the public may benefit from the research.
midunid ke ettelā'āt rā dar pāyānnāmeh-ye foq-lisānsesh minevisad, va ham shāyad dar konferāns tarh konad yā enteshār dahad. ham jamā'at-e marbut va ham jamā'at-e omumi ejāze-ye estefādeh az tahqiq rā dārand.
I understand that if there is any aspect of this project that is unclear to me, I am free to ask the researcher and she will explain it. If I have any other concerns, I am free to contact the researcher's field supervisor for this study:
agar qesmati az in tahqiq rā namifahmid, mitunid az motahaqiq beporsid tā towzih dahad. agar kāri-e digar dārid, mitunid bā sarparast-e motahaqiq mashverat bekonid:

Dr. Faranak Seifoldini, Professor of Social Sciences
College of Literature and Social Sciences, Shiraz University
Tappe Eram, Shiraz, Iran
Doktor-e Seifoldini, ostād-e olum-e ensāni
dāneshkade-ye adabiyāt va olum-e ensāni, dāneshgāh-e shirāz
tappe-ye eram, shirāz, irān
I understand that, should I wish to obtain the results of the researcher's work in the future, it will be available in the Shiraz University Library and in the public property of the Lurs; that is, with the local clan leader.
midunid ke agar dar āyande natije-ye kār-e motahaqiq rā mixāhid begirid, be ketābxāneh-ye dāneshgāh-e shirāz, yā be in tā'ife az ashāyer-e lorhā ke dar in deh ast marāje'e konid.

Therefore I, _____, hereby give my full consent for use of any data gathered from my words or activities by Christina Van der Wal Anonby during the course of her research.
āyā, banā bar-e in , shomā, _____(nām-e-tān), barā-ye estefādeh-ye har ettelā'āt az sohbatetān va raftāretān ke xānom-e ānownbi benevisad dar moqei-ye tahqiq hālā ejāze midehid?

_____	_____
Signature (or Vocal Consent) of Informant	Date
nām va/yā emzā-ye mosāhebeh-shavandeh	*tārix*

Appendix D: Glossary of Luri and Fārsi Terms

Orthographic conventions for the transcription of Luri follow the linguistic analysis of Luri by E. J. Anonby (2002). However, inability to produce the long A on available technolog results in blanks in terms here where such an A should be.

aql: intelligence
awru: *lit.* 'face-water.' Reputation
Baluchi: a tribe of south eastern Iran as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan
barxordi: social relations
bozorgān: *lit.* 'great ones.' Refers to older or revered persons in the community
chādor: a black robe, head-to-toe Shi'a Islamic covering for women
dasgā: *lit.* 'system.' The system of authority, or hierarchy of control. *Also* individual power in social relationships
emām: in Shi'a Islam, a saint or holy person; one of twelve leaders of the Islamic community descended from the Prophet Mohammed
emāmzāda: the shrine or tomb of an emām's descendent
Komachi: pastoralist people of southern Iran, studied by D. Bradburd (1990)
Lur/Lor: a tribe of western Iran as well as Iraq. 'Lor' is the term used by Persians
Luri/Lori: of the Lurs (see 'Lur' above)
Luristān: the homeland of the Lurs. *Also* a province of Iran
nārāhat: upset; uncomfortable; angry
narz: social offering; usually a tray of fruit or candy taken to neighbours and friends with a request for prayer to counteract the effects of a bad dream
neveshta: 'it is written' [i.e. in the Qur'ān]
omr: life experience
pāsgā: gendarmerie
piral: the elders
qabr: grave
Qashqā'i: a Turkic tribe of south western Iran
qorbān: sacrifice. Often refers to the Islamic feast commemorating the prophet Ibrahim's near-sacrifice of his son
Qur'ān: the Koran, Islam's holy book
rāhati: comfort; calmness; wellness
Ramadan: the Islamic month of fasting
rish-sapid: 'grey-beards.' Older people, both men and women
sadaqa: religious offering, given usually to a small box at the emāmzāda, to counteract the effects of a bad dream
salvād: a formulated prayer of praise and greeting to God, the Prophet Mohammed and his descendents
sargozashta: experience
sarkeshi: *lit.* 'head-pulling.' Community discussion, often at a tea gathering. *See* shabneshini
sayyed/sayyeda: descendent (male/female) of the Prophet Mohammed
shabneshini: 'night-sitting.' An evening gathering of friends to chat and drink tea
shahri: person from the city. A Luri social division
Shahsevan: nomadic people of north western Iran, studied by R. Tapper (1979)
solh: truce; reconciliation; peacekeeping

sorfa: tablecloth or spread used for dining or for celebratory displays
Torki/Turki: 'Turkish:' of the Qashqā'i tribe or Azerbaijani people (refering to someone speaking a Turkic language)
vasvasa: satanically inspired or tempted
xeir: good; wellness
xomuni : 'of ourselves.' One of us (of our own family, clan, or tribe). Luri term of self-reference
zanālush: wife of his or her maternal uncle

Appendix E: Ethnographic Data Sources

Fieldnotes

- research questions
- primary data
- descriptions of the setting
- maps
- photographs
- detailed observations of the scene
- informal interviews
- descriptions of domains

Journal

- discovering the symbol
- synthesis of data
- hypotheses
- new questions
- items to verify
- development of research
- ideas for the orientation of investigation

Self as Participant Observer

- memory
- experience

Analysis

- domain analysis
- taxonomic analysis
- componential analysis
- theme analysis
- questions for observation and analysis
- domains selected for analysis
- domain analysis worksheets
- taxonomies
- contrasts

Biograph Database of Informants

- names and special titles
- age
- tribal affiliations
- relationship/ kinship
- occupation
- education
- language(s)
- birthplace
- residence
- dreams told
- ritual roles
- interviews

Dream-telling Database

- date first told
- dream-teller
- audience
- interpreter
- context
- subsequent tellings
- dream as told
- dominant representations, characters, and values
- conclusions listeners drew
- actions prescribed
- interpretation(s)
- results
- other dream-tellings related by similar subject
- further research questions

Index of Dream-tellings

- see appendix F

Formal Ethnographic Interviews

- Majnun
- Azāda
- Mehrdād
- Farā
- Ardeshir
- Farshād
- Shirin
- Noshin
- Behyār
- Parastu
- Homāyun
- Shahnāz
- Maryam
- Ali Reza
- Sorāyā
- Majnun

Appendix F: Listing of Recorded Dream-tellings

A Minor Offense
A Visit from Bushehr
Activities at the River
Ali Reza's Uncle Came
Ali Reza's Uncle Came (2)
Ali Reza's Uncle Came (3)
Arash is Laid Out
Attack by Wild Animals
Auto Accident
Broken Egg
Brother and the Black Clothes
Brother and the Black Clothes (2)
Chick-hunting Fox
Death and Life Experience
Drowned in a Water Dish
Faiths Together
Family Sorfa
Father and Mother Return
Girl at the Spring
Glass Egg
Go to Emām Reza
Good Gunshot
Haircut
Hanan's Haircut
Happenings at the River
House Gathering
Hurting Sister
I am AbelFazr
In My Own House
Letter from the City
Mohamad in Prison
My Brother's Proposal
My Mother's Gift
Nāzyāb's Son Died
Near Driving Accident
Noshin and the Beast
Noshin's Fair Warning
On a Mountain Peak
Pereshkaft Pilgrimage
Poetic Dates
Poor Majnun
Proverb of a Beast
Quick Return from Arumābād
Raging Fire
River and Wood
Nightmare
Sackful of Fish
Saving My Brother
Shahrzād's Haircut
Shave for Sickness
Soldiers Took the Land
Sorāyā's Blue Clothes
Swallowing Sickness
Sweet Meat
That Very Writing
The Death of Behnām
The Death of Behnām (2)
The Fish Farm
The Green Cucumber
The Groom's Death
The Invitation of Emām Reza
The Second Emām
The Sheikh of Arumābād
The Sick Mother
The White Chādor
The White Chādor (2)
The White Suit
Travelers Visit
Trouble on the Mountain
Uncle Irāj and the Mourning
University Acceptance
University Exam
Wedding Mourning at Uncle's House
Wedding or Water Pollution
What the Child Did
When My Mother Died
Worried Wife
Worst Fighting Dream
You Sit at the Spring

Appendix G: Pseudonym List of Formal Ethnographic Interview Informants

1. Azāda
2. Mehrdād
3. Farā
4. Ardeshir
5. Farshād
6. Shirin
7. Noshin
8. Behyār
9. Parastu
10. Homāyun
11. Shahnāz
12. Zeinaw
13. Ali Reza
14. Sorāyā
15. Majnun

COMPOSITE PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES

As a supplement to the findings of the ethnographic study, including informal interviews, fifteen informants were selected for formal interviews. The interviewees are four women younger in age (18-40 years) and three younger men, and four men older in age (41 or more years) and four older women. Excepting two who are eighteen and nineteen years old, all interviewees are married, with one to ten children; some have grandchildren and great-grandchildren. By occupation, most are shepherds or farmers and homemakers; a few are in such government work as the military or teaching, and a few of the younger people are self-classified as *bikār* "unemployed": usually having a high school diploma but no suitable job, sometimes studying for the university entrance examination. The interviewees' formal education ranges between none and a high school diploma, averaging approximately six years. Two of the informants have completed a year of formal post-secondary education. All of the interviewees speak Luri as a mother tongue, and about a quarter speak Farsi reasonably well. All were born in local Luri areas, most in the very same villages or dwelling-places of the winter or summer quarters where they now live

Luri Ethnic Area Map